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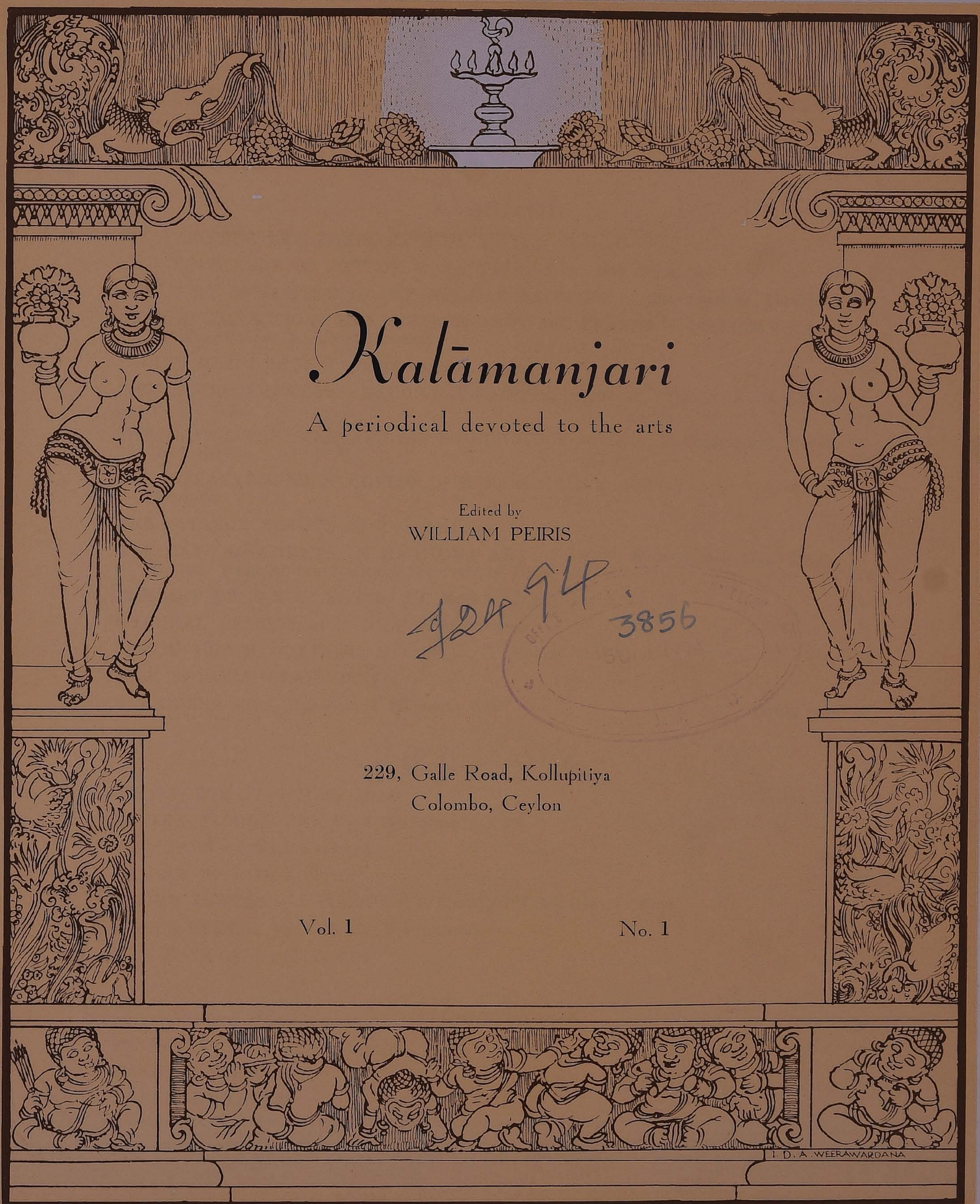

Kalāmanjari

A periodical devoted to the arts

Edited by
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Vol. 1 No. 1

Contents

Page

SIX PAINTERS AND THEIR PATRONS by Lady Moore – – – – – – – 1
THE JEWELLERY OF CEYLON ROYALTY by J. A. Will Perera – – – – – 5
A SURVEY OF CONTEMPORARY BELGIAN PAINTING by Miss Claudine Libovitz – 12
SOME RECOLLECTIONS AND REFERENCES TO DR. ANANDA K. COOMARASWAMY by Mrs. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy – – – – – – – – – – – – 18
INDIAN MUSIC by K. S. Venkataraman – – – – – – – – – – – 24
THE DEVELOPMENT OF MUSICAL UNDERSTANDING by Prof. J. H. G. Lebon, Ph.D., B.Sc. – – – – – – – – – – – – – – – – – 29
THE NAVARATNE RING AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE by G. S. P. Dahanayake, Ceylon Civil Service – – – – – – – – – – – – – – – – 33
THE VISVAKARMANS OF CEYLON by E. Reimers, M.B.E., Retired Ceylon Government Archivist – – – – – – – – – – – – – – – – – 38
THE CULT OF BEAUTY by J. Vijayatunga – – – – – – – – – – 41
ANCIENT ORNAMENTS IN MATHURA ART by Dr. V. S. Agrawala, M.A., Ph.D., D.Litt., Head of the National Museums of India – – – – – – – 45
THE ART OF JAMINI ROY by Dr. Mulk Raj Anand – – – – – – – 54
ORIGINAL DESIGNS by I. D. A. Weerawardana – – – – – – – – 71
CEYLON-DUTCH DOMESTIC ART by R. L. Brohier, O.B.E. – – – – – – 75
FIVE NOTABLE CRAFTSMEN – – – – – – – – – – – – – – 80
VAKA-DEKA—The Alphabet of Sinhalese Art – – – – – – facing page 82

Colour Plates

SELF PORTRAIT by Lady Moore – – – – – – – – – – facing page 1
CEYLON FLOODS, 1947, by Lady Moore – – – – – – – – – ,, ,, 4
THE TREE by Karl Kasmann – – – – – – – – – – – – ,, ,, 26
MENIKE by J. D. A. Perera – – – – – – – – – – – – ,, ,, 42
"DUMB JEWELS"—A COLOUR PHOTOGRAPH by Geo A. Koch – – ,, ,, 68
LUCK'S SYMBOL by I. D. A. Weerawardana – – – – – – – ,, ,, 74
DRY ZONE by David Paynter – – – – – – – – – – – – ,, ,, 78

Monochromes

Page

SERMON IN STONE – – – – – – – – – – – – – – 63
KANDYAN CAMEO – – – – – – – – – – – – – – 65
SILENT SENTINELS – – – – – – – – – – – – – – 67

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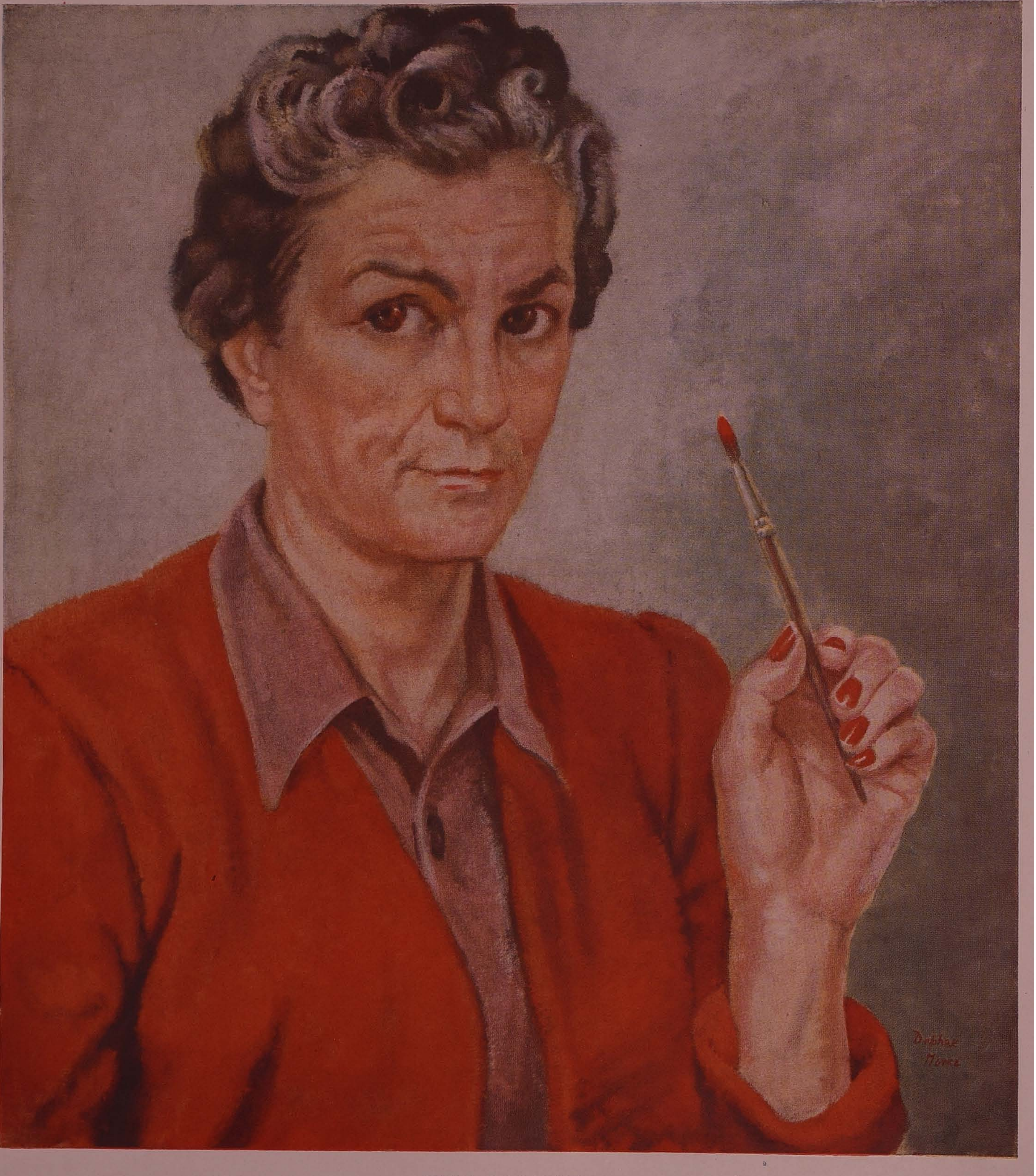

SELF PORTRAIT

Lady Moore

Six Painters and Their Patrons

IT HAS BEEN SAID THAT all civilizations get the culture they deserve, but what that may mean is rather difficult to determine. Looking back it certainly seems to be true that the national art of a country reaches its peak at the period of the country's greatest prosperity, if one thinks of Egypt, Assyria, Greece, Italy, Spain and Holland, for example, but whether these particular civilizations "deserved" their magnificient culture is another matter.

The one thing that is certain is that comparative peace and comparative security are necessary to the artist and that the state of the world today is therefore not conducive to the production of great works of art. Perhaps one can conclude, therefore, that our present civilization is not deserving of culture, though the thought is a depressing one.

Apart from peace and security the artist must have patrons, and these also are lacking today. In the greatest period of painting the patrons were the Church, the State and the Court, and only later the individual buyer. The manner in which this change of patron affected the whole development of painting can be traced in the lives of six painters who lived in the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries; they are Jan Van Eyck, Holbein, Rubens, Van Dyck, Rembrandt and Vermeer, all men of the Netherlands and of Germany, and their stories are interesting because they reveal how the status of the painter changed in the course of those three centuries.

In Europe the golden age of painting began in Italy in the 13th century, where the great and wealthy Roman Catholic Church was the chief patron of artists and commissioned them to paint the huge expanses of wall space in the buildings of the day and execute the statuary which was required by the Roman style of architecture. Consequently the religious subject predominated in the paintings of the period and these were executed directly onto the plaster walls of the buildings.

It was not until a hundred years later that Flemish and Dutch art began to blossom, and with it the vogue of the easel picture and the domestic—as opposed to the grand style of the State or Church—subject to come into its own. It is important to note the circumstances which caused this momentous change.

When the Van Eycks began to paint their pictures the Middle Ages were coming to an end, the Hundred Years War was still being waged in France and in Florence, under the Medicis, a great revival of art and learning was taking place. Flanders was under the rule of Burgundy and Germany was broken up into small states.

Whereas in Italy the Roman style of architecture, with its spacious walls, still persisted, in Flanders the Gothic movement, which

started in Northern France, had become popular and buildings in the Gothic style were being put up everywhere. In a Gothic building the walls are broken up into small spaces and originally these spaces, in the form of painted panels, were considered as part of the architectural design.

The Van Eycks, commissioned by the Church to paint wooden panels of these dimensions, were obliged to find a new medium other than fresco or tempera and so they perfected the art of painting in oils, an invention which was to revolutionise painting and lead to the development of the portable picture on canvas or wood. The new medium also made possible a much wider range of colour and tone and the more or less flat design demanded by the restrictions of fresco gave place to three-dimensional painting, in other words a realistic portrayal of solid forms. (In this connection it is claimed that Ceylon discovered the art of painting with oil at a very much earlier date).

With the advent of the small portable wood panel it became possible for private patrons to buy pictures for the decoration of their homes and gradually these patrons were to take the place of the Church in commissioning artists, thus giving far more scope in subject-matter to the painter, previously limited to religious themes.

Jan Van Eyck (1385-1440) was probably the son of a workman and was born on the borders of Flanders and Germany, and his much older brother and teacher, Hubert, is said to have drawn his inspiration from the stained glass windows and illuminated Missals of the Benedictine Convent where he was educated. At that time artisans were banded together into Guilds and there were painters' Guilds, just as there were Guilds of weavers, brewers, butchers, leather-workers and so on. The method of painting in oils, discovered by the Van Eycks, was disclosed by them to their Guild but was kept a close secret from the public, with the result that oil painting was not established in Italy until nearly a hundred years later.

Both Hubert and Ian were made Court Painters to the Dukes of Burgundy and Jan, the better educated and more versatile of the two, was given various diplomatic missions to perform, which included a trip to Portugal to ask for the hand of Isabella of Portugal on behalf of Philip of Burgundy. As Philip had not seen his prospective bride Van Eyck was commissioned to paint a portrait of her. This was evidently approved for the marriage took place, but it was a delicate mission for the painter, who was presumably more fortunate in his subject than was Holbein, sent on a similar errand at a later date.

Hans Holbein (1497-1543) was a German and the son of a painter and was born five years after the discovery of America by Columbus. At Basel he studied wood and copper engraving but found painting more congenial and may have visited Italy at the age of 19 or 20.

It was a bad time for painters in Germany and the Netherlands, for the Emperor Maximilian, who had done a great deal to encourage art and learning in those countries had died, and with the Reformation the old traditions of religious painting were wrecked and the State and private patrons had ceased to give commissions to artists. England, on the other land, was rich and prosperous under Henry VIII so Holbein, faced with poverty in his own country, went to England to try his luck, armed with an introduction to Sir Thomas More from his patron Erasmus.

From this time he spent most of his life in England, getting commissions for portraits from Sir Thomas More and his friends, then from rich merchants and finally from Henry VIII himself and the noblemen of that glittering Court, to which he became permanently attached. He was the first of the great foreign painters to work in England. He aroused the interest in portrait painting which culminated two centuries later in the birth of the great British School of the 18th century.

Amongst other royal commissions which fell to Holbein's lot was the task of going to Germany to paint Anne of Cleves whom Henry, for political reasons, wished to marry. Although Holbein was not usually a flattering portrait painter his admiration for the far-from-beautiful Anne appears to have carried him away on this occasion and the painting he brought back so pleased Henry that final arrangements were made for the wedding. It is regrettable to recall that the King's disappointment on meeting his bride was such that he forgot to give her the present he had brought for her and described her as a " Flemish mare ". His remarks about Holbein are not recorded.

Thirty-four years after Holbein had died in London from plague, and when Elizabeth was in the 20th year of her reign in England, Rubens (1577-1640) was born in Flanders. During his babyhood religious and political differences in the Netherlands led to the breaking away of Holland from Flanders and from this time onwards Holland was a Protestant State whilst Flanders still remained under Spain and true to the Roman Catholic Church.

Rubens had the advantage of a good education and could speak six or seven languages from an early age and after studying painting under various masters he set upon his own account at the age of 21, when he visited Venice and fell under the spell of Titian, whose influence is obvious in all his paintings, as regards both subject and treatment.

His charm of manner and knowledge of the world resulted in his appointment to the Court of the Duke of Mantna, by whom he was sent on various diplomatic missions to foreign countries, and at the age of 32 he returned to Flanders as Court Painter to the Archduke of the Spanish Netherlands, collected a large number of pupils and became recognised as the head of the Flemish School of painting.

It was a period of peace after strife in Flanders, the Catholic Church was predominant and rich and Rubens was given many commissions for religious and other paintings. He produced a great number of pictures, mostly on a large scale, and in order to carry out his commissions had to enlist the help of his pupils, who painted clothes, backgrounds and the less important parts of his pictures—to the advantage both of the pupils and of the Master's purse. He was the most successful painter of his day, enjoyed fame and prosperity all his life and, unlike Rembrandt, died at the height of his glory.

Combining painting and diplomacy, Rubens was sent to England to bring about a treaty between the King of Spain and Charles I of England, who rewarded him with a commission and a knighthood, and he became very popular in England, both as a painter and a diplomat. His point of view was essentially a worldly one and his pictures, religious or otherwise, display a riotous delight in form and colour and the sensuous qualities of paint.

And then came Van Dyck (1599-1641) the son of a wealthy silk merchant in Antwerp, who was born when Rubens was 22 and worked as his assistant 21 years later. He too went to Italy and was inspired by the Venetian painters and after achieving much success in Genoa he also gravitated to England where he became attached to the Court of Charles I, that great patron of the arts.

In England Van Dyck became the most fashionable portrait painter in the country and, like Rubens, employed many pupils to work on his commissions. He was knighted by Charles I and enjoyed great prosperity in the country of his adoption.

With Rembrandt (1606-1669) we arrive at a new stage in the history of painting. On the breaking away of Holland from Flanders a new spirit began to show itself in Dutch art and learning. The influence of the Catholic Church had gone and Holland, proud of its religious and political independence, shut itself away from foreign influence of all kinds and began to develop within its own boundaries a fresh and individual art. For the first time artists began to look at nature with eyes that were undazzled by either religious fervour or the gilt magnificience and splendours of a Royal Court, and for the first time painting became "domestic".

For forty years Dutch painting waxed, inspired by its new spirit, while Italian painting waned and British hardly existed. The English demonstrated their appreciation of art in 1649 by executing Charles I, who had imported the best of the foreign artists, but in Holland paintings by first-class artists were sold in the markets, together with butter, cheese, vegetables and meat, and pictures began to decorate the walls of even the poorer homes.

Rembrandt, the son of a miller of Leiden, became the foremost portrait painter of Amsterdam and turned out numbers of solid portraits of the still more solid burghers of the town, enjoying prosperity for some years. Later, however, being too honest an artist to flatter his sitters and lacking the patronage of Church or Court, he fell out of favour and died eventually a bankrupt, old and lonely, though one of the greatest painters the world has known.

The history of Vermeer (1632-1675) is even stranger for it is only comparatively recently that he has become recognised as the exquisite

painter he is. He was not appreciated by his contemporaries and in order to sell his pictures after his death dealers were obliged to forge the name of de Hooch and other lesser painters upon his canvases. His lovely luminous pictures, with the inevitable Persian rugs (brought back to Holland by merchant seamen) upon the tables, could be picked up in the market for next to nothing, so undiscriminating was the public taste. "The Little Street", for example, which was bought for £ 6 in 1696 was sold in 1921 for £ 80,000 and another, bought for under 5/- is now valued at over £ 100,000.

What does the history of these six painters prove?

DAPHNE MOORE

Queen's House, Colombo
May 11, 1949.

CEYLON FLOODS, 1947 *Lady Moore*

The Jewellery of Ceylon Royalty

IT IS MY HAPPY PRIVILEGE to discuss the Royal Jewellery of Ceylon's kings and queens.

It is a notable fact that the Ceylon King wore the apparel of God Vishnu. A casual visit to one of our ancient Buddhist shrines would convince the reader that the kingly robes were identical with those of God Vishnu. The Siamese Royal attire was, and is to this day, the same, and was copied from Ceylon.

* * *

CEYLON'S ROYAL JEWELLERY

The Kings of the *Maha* and *Sulu Wansa* (greater and lesser dynasties), regarded it almost a religious duty to equip their consorts, and children of both sexes, with superb articles of jewellery wherewith to adorn themselves. No Queen ever appeared before her Lord and Master, the Sovereign of the Realm, without jewels. It was incumbent on them to deck their bodies with the best of jewellery, when they appeared before His Majesty. Masterpieces of the goldsmiths' art not only added lustre to those Royal personages, but also gave them a pardonable sense of pride and of power.

From the dim dawn of Eastern history, almost all potentates, great and small, were conscious of the beneficial influences on those of their line who donned jewellery. Moreover, it was part and parcel of the prevalent beliefs, that the wearing of jewellery protected Royalty from the baneful influences of malevolent spirits.

I wish to emphasise at the very outset that Ceylon Royal Jewellery owed much of its refinement and grandeur to the use of Cabochon cut gems, which permitted all the colour in the gems to be revealed in their intensity. It is no exaggeration to say that there are few, or no persons, competent to assess Ceylon and other Eastern Royal Jewellery at their true worth. In the portrait sculptures extant at the ancient capitals of Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa, and Tissamaharama, and in the Buddhist shrines at Seruwila, Dambulla, Dodantale, Kandy, etc., the statues of Ceylon's Kings depict the *Seu-Seta-Arbharana* or Sixty-Four Ornaments of Ceylon Royalty to full advantage. It is so in the many mural paintings of monarchs in our ancient Buddhist temples. These Sixty-Four Articles of Royal Jewellery, in fact, formed the major portion of the regal apparel. When the capitals were at Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa, climatic conditions militated against the use of upper garments. If, and when upper robes were

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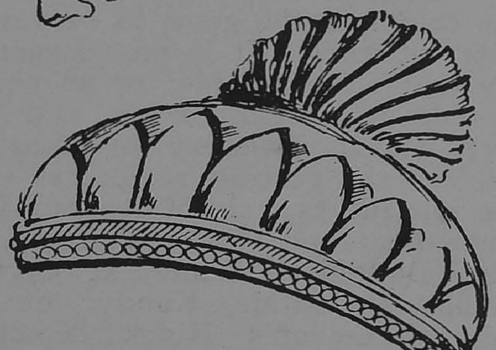

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1. Jewelled Tiara or Circlet worn by Kings and Princes, Anuradhapura. Nos. 1 and 2, from designs in Author's Collection. Copyright.

2. King Dutugemunu's Veshtana, Velema or Turban of Gold Cloth as Mr. H. C. P. Bell found on the *Torso*.

3. King Dutugemunu's Tiara or Gem Studded Circlet on restored statue at Anuradhapura.

worn by members of either sex in the Royal Household, the material used was gossamer-like chiffons, silks, or muslins. Even then, the clothing could not be easily discerned, owing to the profusion and thickness of the gold ornaments. At Polonnaruwa, Sigiriya, and Anuradhapura, the Sixty-Four Ornaments were generally worn over the bare upper body, owing to the extreme heat in that dry zone. It was so when the capital-city was at Tissamaharama, in the south-east dry zone.

* * *

THE FOUR GUILDS OF ROYAL CRAFTSMEN

In monarchical times, Ceylon had Four Guilds of Royal Craftsmen, known as *Pattal Hatara*. The late Dr. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, in his monumental work *Medieval Sinhalese Art*, states as follows about the Four Guilds :

"The best of the higher craftsmen (gold and silversmiths, painters, and ivory carvers, etc.), working immediately for the King, formed a close, largely hereditary, corporation of craftsmen called the PATTAL HATARA (Four Workshops); these men worked only for the King, unless by his express permission (though of course, their sons or pupils might do otherwise); they were liable to be continually engaged in Kandy, while the *Kottal Badde* men were divided into relays, serving by turns in Kandy for periods of two months. The *Kottal Badde* men in each district were under a foreman (*Mul-acariya*), belonging to the PATTAL HATARA. Four other foremen, one for each *Pattala* were in constant attendance at the Palace. Originally, there seems to have been only one *Pattala*, called the ABHARANA (Regalia) PATTALA, but this was afterwards divided into an ABHARANA PATTALA, or Jewellery Workshop, an OTUNNA PATTALA, or Crown Workshop, a RANKADU PATTALA, or Golden Sword Workshop (Armoury), and a SIMHASANA (Lion Throne) PATTALA, the last including particularly painters and ivory carvers. But the craftsmen seem to have passed from one *Pattala* to another, according to the work entrusted

to them. A place in the PATTAL HATARA was usually hereditary in the chief craftsmen's families and was a position much coveted. The chief families had considerable standing, often owning land granted by the King.

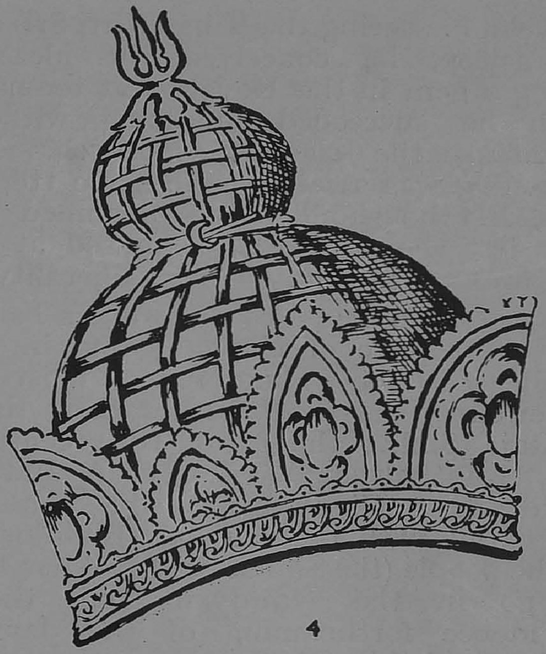
"In 1644 A.D. one Hadu Nayide of Mangalagama, 'presented a (newly) gilt Koku-sword of gold' was given 6 ammunams sowing extent at Mahagoda in Kinigoda Korale in Dissavany of 4 Korales.

"In 1665 A.D. the goldsmith Marukona Ratna Abharana Vedakaraya was commanded 'to make jewellery required for the Royal Dress, and having made and submitted several jewellery to the Great King' asked as reward land at Mottuvelagama Badavedilla. The King granted him high and low land there.

"In the reign of King Kirti Sri, Gannoruwa Muhandirama (a descendant of Gannoruwa Navaratna Davunda Abharana Acariya) was a skilful goldsmith. He worked in the King's Palace. The King made him presents of land and money, and an elephant".

It will therefore be seen that the Kings of Ceylon were great patrons of arts and crafts. Some of them rewarded goldsmiths even with portions of the royal robes. When the Gangarama Vihare was completed, the master-craftsman received an entire set of royal robes. Eminent craftsmen received at His Majesty's hands the much-coveted gold frontlet, in recognition of their superb work (i.e. *Patabendi* decoration, or *Pata-Tahaduva*). Only in one instance were gifts bestowed by a king confiscated by his successor. When Gannoruwa Muhandirama (to whom King Kirti Sri presented lands, money, and an elephant) died; the indolent King Rajadhi Raja Sinha, confiscated the gifts, and had the movables removed to the Royal Palace in Kandy. His Majesty's mind appears to have been poisoned by a courtier, otherwise that monarch was a good man who encouraged literature and poetry.

Dr. Coomaraswamy narrates the expert skill of one goldsmith in the following words: "A story is told of the goldsmith Ratnavalli Navaratna Abharana of



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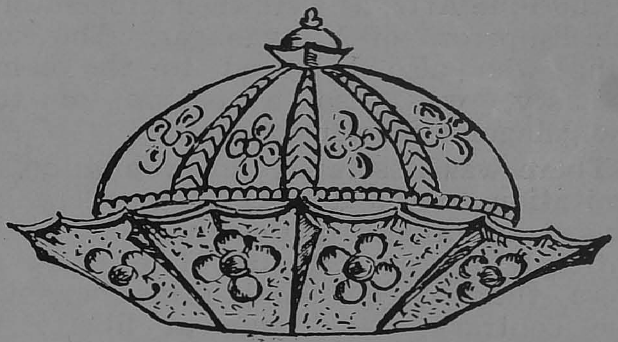

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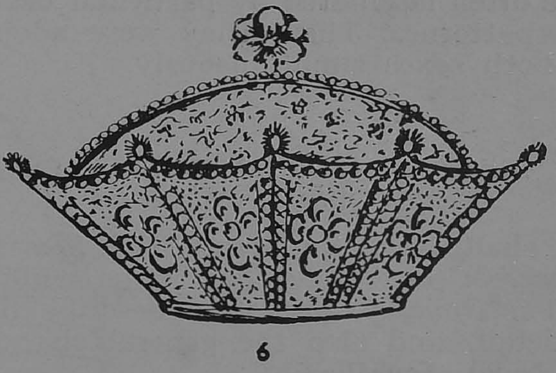

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4. 15th to 16th Centuries, A.C.

5. 17th Century, A.C.

6. 18th and 19th Centuries, A.C.

Nilavela, . . . seeing the King (Kirti Sri) one day asleep, he conceived the idea of setting a gem in the Royal great toe-nail; which he succeeded in doing without awakening the sleeping monarch. His awakening was awaited with some trepidation, lest he should have presumed too far; but the King was delighted at his skill, and rewarded him with liberality".

Some of the best Royal jewellers hailed from the village of Mangalagama in the Kegalle District. They made most of the jewellery *par-excellence* for King Kirti Sri Raja Sinha, the great 18th century King, who, although an Aryan Indian Prince and a Hindu by creed; "made himself one with the religion (Buddhism) and the people (the Sinhalese)". Wherever you go in the Kandyan land, there is evidence forthcoming of the lavish patronage of this King; whose ancestors in Tanjore and Madura, were the patrons of the Fine Arts, as were their progenitors, the Emperors of Vijayanagar. The last King who also belonged to the same Dynasty, was also a patron of the Mangalagama master-goldsmiths.

There was absolutely no prohibition or limitation to the display of jewellery by kings and princes in Ceylon. They were entitled to wear a wealth of jewellery as were their queens and princesses. On the contrary, they were at liberty to exceed the number assigned to Royal females. It so happened that both sexes were often fascinated by particular designs and patterns. Then, they were adopted by both sexes simultaneously.

* * *

THE SIXTY-FOUR ORNAMENTS OF CEYLON ROYALTY

I shall here enumerate the *Seu Seta Abharana* or Sixty-Four Ornaments of Ceylon Royalty, and then describe them in detail, and also the general character of Royal Jewellery.

1, Siddha Otunna and *Ata-mulu-Toppiya* (eight cornered gold hat); 2, Keurabharana; 3, Nalalsada; 4, Nalalpata; 5, Ruvanpata; 6, Mukha Vadam-pattodam; 7, Getahu Palandanava; 8, Ruvan Salu; 9, Vuarnajala; 10, Veda Nimulhera; 11, Hasta Muddikka; 12, Muddika; 13, Peres or Peves; 14, Rahu Gediya; 15, Dasaru; 16, Pasiru; 17, Hastajala; 18, Pilinevavu Pachcha Kayivadam; 19, Patra; 20, Kataka; 21, Kayisu; 22, Kayisuttra; 23, Kayi Pottu; 24, Kayi Kappu; 25, Kayi Vadam; 26, Rasana; 27, Rangiri-valalu; 28, Hinasudana; 29, Hinasadama; 30, Makarapata; 31, Bahudandi; 32, Minivalalu; 33, Mini-Kayivadam; 34, Eka-vela; 35, Hinasada; 36, Udara-Bandhana; 37, Angunu Palandanava; 38, Avulheva; 39, Dasa-Angani; 40, Grivalankara; 41, Gele-Muthumala; 42, Mukhtaharaya; 43, Mutudam or Mutupata; 44, Pabalu-dam; 45, Randam; 46, Rididam; 47, Saddam; 48, Siddatadam; 49, Karnavatansa; 50, Kavanabharana; 51, Hina-Sutra; 52, Janghabarana; 53, Urujala; 54, Padajala; 55, Kansutalam; 56, Nuruvala; 57, Padagam; 58, Pattodam; 59, Pa-salambu; 60, Pad-Mudu; 61, Nupuru; 62, Padasrunkhala; 63, Pada-Kinkini; 64, Pada-Jangha.

In addition to the above-listed Sixty-Four Ornaments there were:—65, Padatrana; 66, Pada-Sankha-Jala and 67. Padabharana.

The artisans of the Royal Lion Throne (Simhasana Pattala) belonged to the villages of Deldeniya, Arattana, Ullandupitiya, Parakotawella, Nilagama, Hulangamuwa and Kawudugama.

CROWNS: 1, The *Siddha Otunna* or Crown Celestial. Conical in shape. Worn by the God-Kings. "The Crown *par-excellence* of Sinhalese Royalty". (Mr. E. W. Perera, *R.A.S. Journal*, No. XXIII); 2, *Mini* or Jewel Crown; 3, *Sinha Otunna* or Lion Crown; 4, *Vyagra* or Tiger Crown; 5, *Ruwan Otunna* = Golden Crown; 6, *Atamulu-toppiya*. The eight-cornered gold hat worn by the later kings, notably, members of the last Dynasty.

TIARAS: Tiaras were worn by males and females. Statuary and mural paintings show them.

OTHER HEAD DECORATIONS: The *Keurabharana* were festoons adorning the Crowns. These were of gold, pearls, and gems.

MOUTH ORNAMENT: The *Mukha-Vadam-Pattodam*. I regret, my endeavours

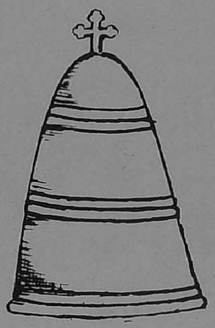
to obtain a description of this ornament have failed. No illustrations or details are available.

FRONTLETS AND FOREHEAD PLATES: 1, The *Nalalsada* was placed at the central hair-parting; 2, *The Nalalpata*—Gold forehead-plate. Either of plain gold or jewelled; 3, The *Ruvanpata* was a gold frontlet worn by Royalty.

In addition to the Sixty-Four Ornaments mentioned in our Chronicles—descriptions of almost all are given in this article—my researches brought to light three others. They were foot decorations, *viz.* *Padatrana* (gold shoes or slippers), *Pada-Sankha-Jala*, (a conch-shaped ornament), and the **Padabharana*. These names refer to foot ornaments described by me. Then there was a grand total of Sixty-Seven Royal Ornaments. *Ear-rings, bosses*, etc. . . . worn by both sexes. *Karnavatansa* were gold ear-rings, 2. *Kavanabharana* were ear ornaments. Bo-leaf or mango-design ear decorations are seen at Sigiriya. *Karna-kundal-abharana* were ear-drops, while *Tadagam* (*cf.* Skt. *Tatanka*) = large ear-rings. *Todu*, and *Kadu-kappu* were yet others.

NECKLACES, NECK-CHAINS, COLLARS, ETC.: *Angulu-Palandanava* was a gold chain set with pearls and gems. The *Muthupata* meant a rope of pearls.

* Ornaments for the feet.



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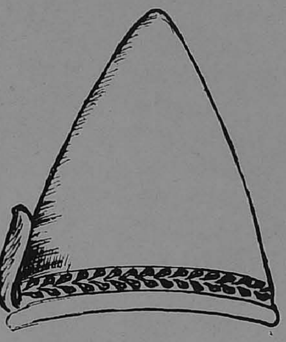

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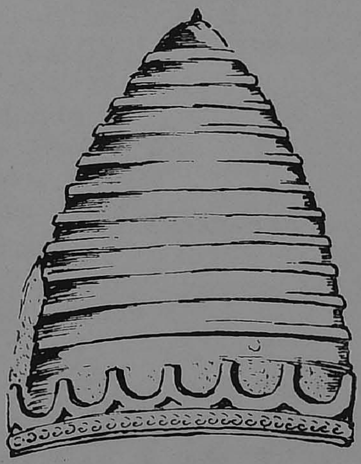

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The *Avulhewa* = a network-pattern pearl necklace. *Dasa Angani* was a neck-chain with the Nine Auspicious Jewels (*Navarathna*). The character of *Grivalankara* is not known. *Gele-Muthumala* was a garland of pearls, the *Mukhtaharaya* signified a string of pearls. *Muthudam* or *Muthupata* also had pearls. *Pabuludam* = bead necklace. *Randam* = gold necklace, *Rididam* = silver neck-chain. The *Saddam* meant seven gold strings or chains. Nothing is known today about the *Siddatadam*. *Kurulu-Bendi-Malaya* was a famous necklace with a mythical bird. The coral necklace was called *Pallam-Mala* *Pendants* (*Padakkam*). . . . The Bird Pendant was named *Kurulu-Padakkama*.

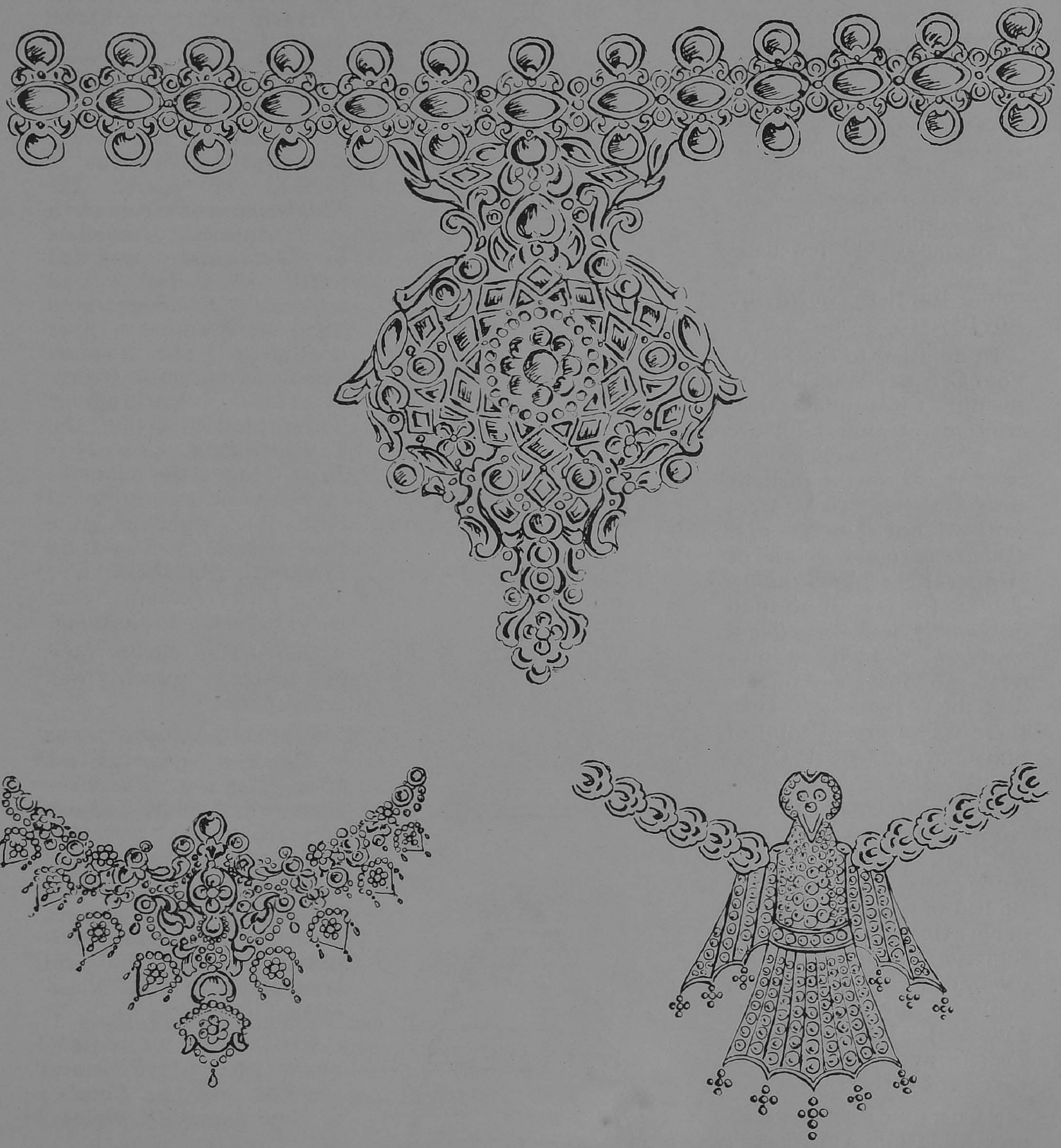
N.B.—The single rope of monster pearls was called *Ekavali*.

SHOULDER DECORATIONS: 1, *Dasaru*—resembled epaulettes; 2, *Pasiru*—combined shoulder and ear decorations.

ARMLETS: *Bahudandi* were golden armlets. *Mini-valalu* were gem-set armlets. The *Mini-Kayivadam* = special right arm ornament with Nine (*Navarathna*) Gems.

FOREARM BANGLES, BRACELETS, ETC.: Plain and jewelled, *viz.* 1, *Kataka*; 2, *Kayisum*; 3, *Kayisutra*;

7. Christian King Don Joao's 16th Century.
8. 12th Century, A.C.
9. Siddha Otunna of King Wattagamini, 1st Century, B.C.
10. 1st and 2nd Centuries, B.C.



WORKING DRAWING FOR A GEM-SET BELT FOR
KING SRI VIKRAMA RAJASINHA

4, *Kayi-pottu*; 6, *Kayi-vadam*, of various designs; 7, *Rasana* = gold wristlets; 8, *Rangiri-valalu* were bangles with tiny gold bells.

HAND AND FINGER ORNAMENTS: *Hastajala*—gloves. *Patra* was the Bo-leaf ornament for back of right hand. The *Pilinevavu-Pachcha-Kayivadam*—tiger-claw jewelled decoration for left hand. The Royal Signet Ring called *Peres-Muduva*, was massive, and gem-studded. *Hasta-Muddika* = jewelled ring. *Navaratna-Mudika* had the Nine Gems. Plain gold rings were called *Muddika*. The *Rahu-gediya* was the ornament on the left thumb.

WAIST-CHAINS, GIRDLES, AND ORNAMENTS: The *Ekavali* (already mentioned) was also worn as a waist-chain. *Hinasada* was an elegant gold belt. The *Udara-Bandhana* was a gold-worked belt. *Ran-Sawadi* a pliable gold waist-chain. The golden girdle went by the name *Ruvan-wela*. A girdle with the mythical monster "Makara" was the *Makara-pata*. Gigantic gold flowers at waist were named *Hinasadama*. The graceful decorations at the four corners of the waist were called *Hinasudana*.

GOLDEN ROBES: The *Getahu-Palandanava* meant gold-embroidered jackets. The golden shawl or upper garment set with gems was either called *Ruvan-salu* or *Ruvan-solu*. Fine gold net was *Vnarnajala*. Another gold jacket was the *Veda-Mimulhera*.

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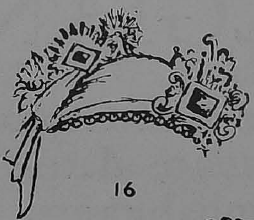
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11—16. Tiaras of Royal Females, Sigiriya.

17. Female Head Ornament, Isurumuniya, Anuradhapura.

18. Female Head Ornament, Polonnaruwa.

LEG AND KNEE ORNAMENTS: Two of the former. 1, *Janghabharana*; 2, *Hinasutra* (six in all, for both legs); *Urujala* = network knee decoration. *Padajala* were gold stockings.

ANKLETS (*HALAN*): 1, *Pasalambu*; 2, *Pattodam* tied above the ankles; 3, *Nuruvela*; 4, *Padagam*; and 5, *Kausutulam* (which had small gold bells).

FOOT ORNAMENTS: 1, Conch-shaped ones called *Pada-sankha-jala*; 2, bell-fringed ones known as *Pada-Kinkini*; 3, hollow gold tubing were the *Nupuru*; 4, *Padasrunkhala* and *Padajangha* (bangles for feet).

GOLD SHOES AND SLIPPERS: Over the *Padajala* (gold thread stockings) were worn gold shoes or slippers called *Padatrana*, made by the famous Mangalagama Master-Goldsmiths.

FEET AND TOE ORNAMENTS: *Padabharana* (ornaments for the feet) differed from the rest. *Pada-Mudu* = toe-rings.

Thus arrayed in glittering gold from head to foot, the Kings and Queens of Lanka (Ceylon) not only inspired poet and courtier but placed their sign of approval on one of the most significant arts of Ceylon—the art of jewellery.

J. A. WILL PERERA

PERMEKE: LANDSCAPE

A Survey of Contemporary

BELGIAN PAINTING

A small country (less than half Ceylon in size); a comparatively new country (its independence dates only from 1830); a little more than eight million inhabitants. Such is Belgium.

A country which, small as it is, has always been dual in population as well as in language; jammed between growing and competing Powers; ideally situated as a battle-field, and consequently relentlessly used as such for imperialistic

VAN DE WOESTYNE: ANNUNCIATION

quarrels whose roots were, more often than not, strangely remote from her soil.

Moreover, drawn by two conflicting poles of attraction (Latin, Germanic) and all the while passing from one foreign domination to another (French, Spanish, Austrian, Dutch). Such also is Belgium.

No freedom, no peace, and not even a name, but since the 15th century producing an uninterrupted succession of painters such as only Italy and France can claim in continuity. And then, not the faded shadows of towering

neighbours, but so unmistakably particularised that it was found necessary to brand their work with the somewhat inaccurate stamp Flemish* at a time when a more adequate description was hard to find, the word Belgium having yet to be born four centuries later.

And today in most of Europe's museums a quarter of the wall space is devoted to the heralding of the creative genius of a people who never represented more than the fiftieth part of its total population.

* * *

If it is true that a nation's claim to existence is based more rightfully on its creative genius than on its military strength, then Belgium IS, undoubtedly; and WAS a long-time before her official recognition.

Less flimsy than the paper sheets or even parchment rolls of peace treaties, she can put forward, to justify her ante-political existence, the names of at least three world famous painters: VAN EYCK, BRUEGHEL and RUBENS.

VAN EYCK it was who first during the 15th century, "broke through the background", as a French critic put it, letting the humming world-scenery and daylight invade the, until then, somewhat cut-away lives of the Virgin, the Saints and the Martyrs which constituted the usual source of inspiration of the artists of his time.

BRUEGHEL, during the bloodstained 16th century kept Flemish painting from yielding too unreservedly to the lure of the Italian schools. His work bears the dual stamp of the traditional Flemish school of painting: a keen perception of the tellural beauty of the world, and of the "humanness" of man.

And in the somewhat pompous 17th century RUBENS'S vital love of life and flesh saved his compositions from the inflated voidness of mere gorgeousness.

But that is the Past . . .

Despite the fact that during the 19th and 20th centuries none of the major schools were hatched in Belgium (Impressionism, Expressionism, Fauvism, Cubism) they found there a re-moulding and blending thorough enough not to be considered as a mere sheepish echo.

Empirically minded and healthily "sensed", the Belgian painter is perhaps less inclined towards the theoretical creation of new schools than towards their practical realisation on canvas.

It is at once his strength and his weakness. Less tempted to fall into sterilising aestheticism, during the relaxed periods when his more imaginative neighbours slumber, he has a tendency to give way to unleavened realism. None the less this ascendancy of the practitioner over the theoretician explains the dogged continuity of the "Belgian" school of painting which, although not artificially propped up by isolationism, never cowed down passively to foreign fashions or moods.

If basically a materialist (and as such a lover of colour mainly), the Belgian painter has yet also a mystical side to his make-up: an intuition of the mystery in and of things. So it is not surprising, if it is to the Northern Expressionist school, that he took the best amongst all the divergent aesthetical movements of the present century, finding in it the formal expression of an already inherent tendency of his nature.

* * *

As for the Impressionist phase through which nearly all the contemporary Belgian painters, living and dead, passed, it affected them less as a technique than as a mood, a climate.

And a strong pictorial instinct coupled with a certain lack of cerebrality kept the contemporary Belgian painting almost entirely immune from Seurat's Neo-Impressionism (Pointillisme) as well as from the Cubist movement, both of which, by the way, had a sterilising effect in other countries.

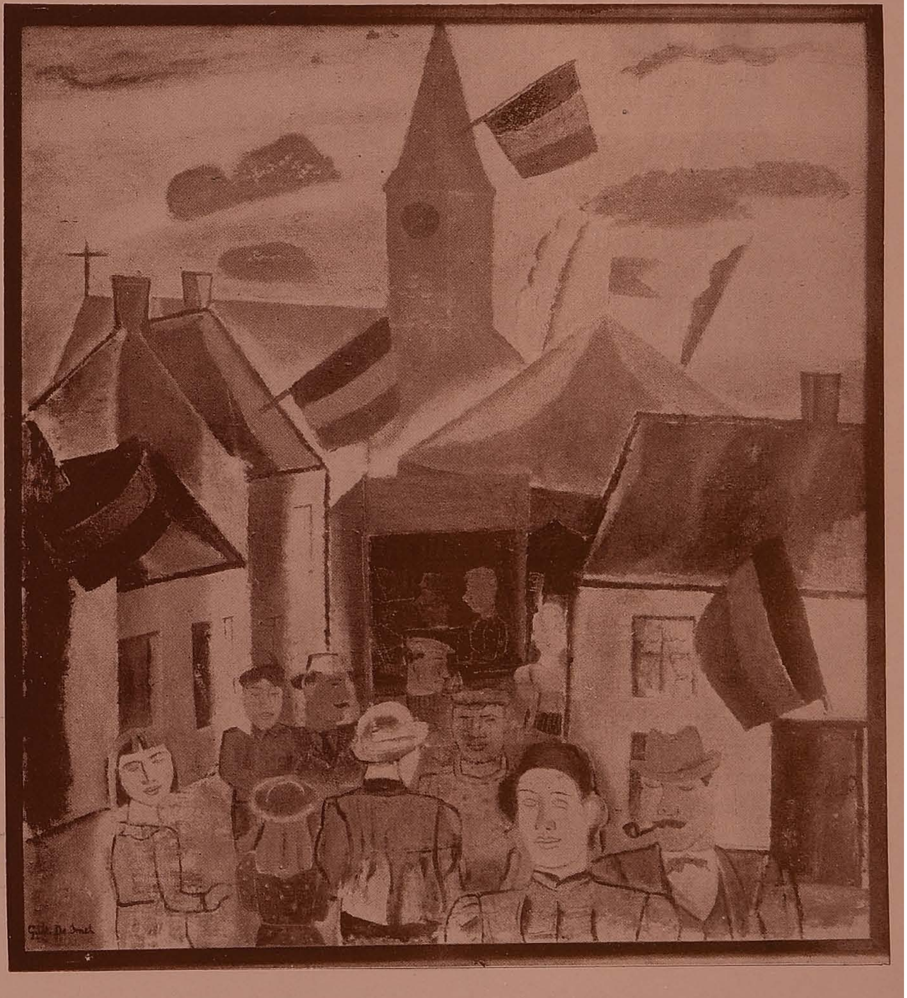
Although the span of what can be rightfully considered "contemporary" painting stretches not even over half a

* The artists actually came also from other parts of Belgium than Flanders.

ENSOR:

MASKS IN FRONT OF DEATH

5 JUL 1974



DE SMET:

THE FAIR IN FLANDERS

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century, two world wars with their general after effects have split this comparatively short period of time: until 1914, the bloom of Impressionism; between the years 1920 and 1930, the flourishing of the Expressionist school; then a period of relaxation until 1940, and since 1940 a somewhat chaotic period torn apart by two conflicting attitudes the recoiling back to a certain naturalism, and the marching on the scorched road of abstraction, or better of the "IRREAL", which are the two normal human reactions to the horrors of a still unforgotten war and of an unsettled ensuing peace.

* * *

If I had to condense the fame of the pre-war (1940) Belgian painting in two names, it would be those of ENSOR and of PERMEKE, both still alive.*

ENSOR born in Ostend, the sea-resort, in 1860, the son of an Englishman and of a Flemish mother of Spanish descent.

PERMEKE born in Antwerp, the Flemish seaport, in 1886. More different personalities would be hard to find—Ensor all subtleness, and whose palette has the shell-like tints of the North Sea skies and sand.

Gifted with a strong sense of humour, a typically Anglo-Saxon tendency to satirize in paint, coupled with a healthy Flemish truculence, he is the poet of a stuffy provincial bourgeoisie, whose bad taste is transfigured by the flickering light of the Impressionists, and of morbid masquerades, the satirical harshness of which is robed in the most exquisite and rare colouring.

Ensor is the most brilliant link between the 19th and the 20th centuries.

Permeke, painter and later sculptor too, has by no means Ensor's elfin-like and ambiguous charm.

Expressionist by choice and by temperament, he is basically a painter, apprehending the surrounding world with his senses and his heart—A queer mixture of sensitiveness and brutality, yet in his best work well balanced between those disrupting tendencies.

The sea, the land, the peasant and his beasts, the trees and the sky—he is the lover of the elemental, the vital. His treatment is broad, and his colour at once sombre and warm—browns, greys and blacks suddenly set aflame with splashes of rusty reds, dusty pinks, olive greens, iridescent greys, or strawy yellows, creating an atmosphere strongly his own and yet true to a certain modulation of nature.

* * *

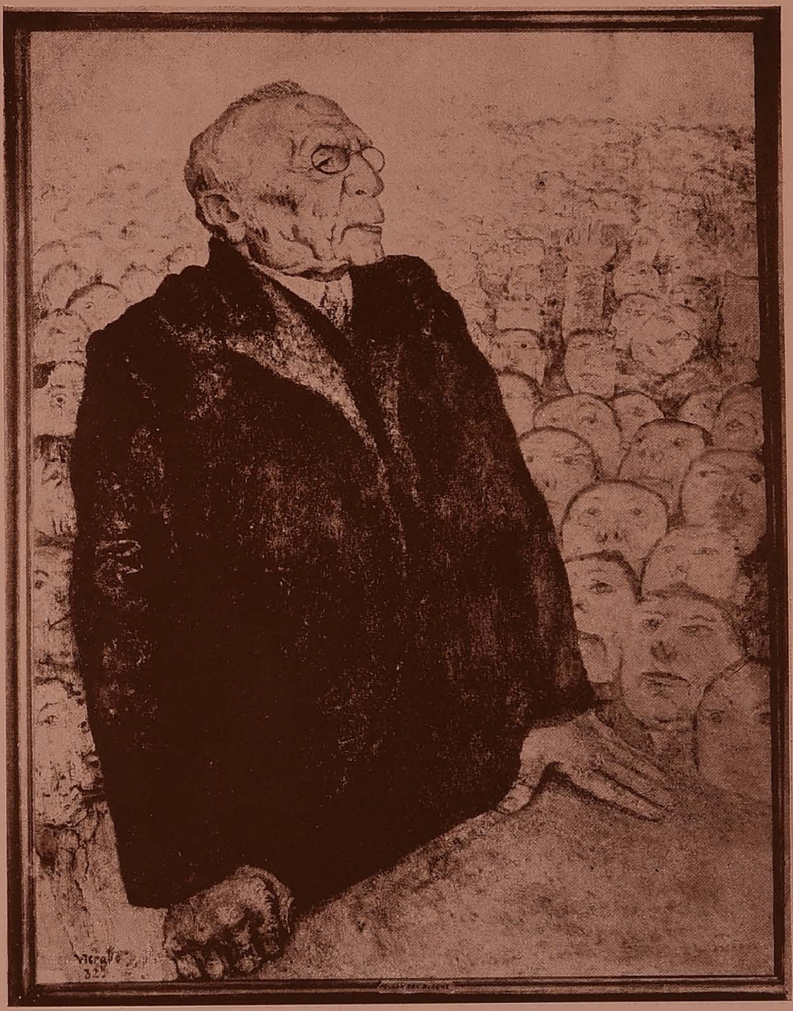
But next to these two names of international fame, there are still many others to cite, if only amongst the stronger personalities.

Amongst the Impressionists, two short-lived rockets: Evenepoel, dying in 1899 at the age of 28 years; Rik Wouters in 1916, at the age of 34. Evenepoel refined and sensitive as a portrait painter of young women and children, and showing astonishing mastery as an occasional orientalist; Wouters, painter and sculptor, with his Panlike greed for life and light, squeezing the Impressionist experience of its last drops.

Then Jacob Smits (dead in 1928), another link between the 19th and 20th centuries—religious and almost biblical in life and work, blending deeply the spiritual with the material, but becoming at the end of his life a monomaniac of light which he tried to bait with a strange technique consisting of the piling up of such an amount of paint on the canvas that it acquires an almost rocky surface.

And amongst the Expressionists, the most typical and also most excessive: Fritz van den Berghe (dead in 1939) who was haunted by the social hideousness of his time—Brusselman, Expressionist to the verge of abstraction from which only a certain inner lyricism saves him, as it saved Gustave De Smet, who died in 1943, and who was lured by Cubism but whose sense of the human kept him away from the almost purely plastic researches of that dried up school, leaving him half way between reality and abstraction in

* Ensor died on November 19, 1949.



VAN DEN BERGHE: PORTRAIT OF A SOCIALIST LEADER

a compromise or balance typical of his countrymen; more loosely linked with foreign schools, Gustave Van de Woestyne (dead in 1945), a mystic, a poet, the very slow and thorough painter of religious and allegorical scenes, still lives and portraits, almost ascetic in his will to reduce composition and colour to the bare essential; Valerius de Saedeleer (dead in 1941), the static painter of static and silent landscapes; the mischievous Tytgat, over 70 years old, at once cunning and childish but gifted with a delicate and almost powdery range of colour.

* * *

The two main representatives of the Surrealist school, Magritte and Delvaux, have acquired greater fame outside their country than in it. Magritte is the more orthodox of the two, as Delvaux, despite his obsession with the feminine nude and his over sleek technique characteristic of the school, aims less at the relief of the subconscious than at the rendering of plastic beauty.

Of the younger generation, those who were in their thirties in 1940, it is difficult to speak. Their status offers the discomfort of transition, mumbling and hesitant, with sporadic successes due to individual talent and skill; their shapelessness is but the local aspect of a more general unsettledness.

Although not devoid of individual talent, the general impression is that of emptiness and above all faithlessness, the already out-of-date pre-war "avant garde" being used as mere recipes, hopelessly devitalised by an attempt at a synthesis which more often than not amounts to the neutralising of their respective qualities instead of their blending.

The diversity of the tendencies appears less as the manifestation of an excess of vitality than of the disintegration of a wilting creativeness. Appealing as it may appear at first to the eye, the present naturalistic tendency is but shyness, scepticism and impotence combined, and the abstract tendencies but the deceitful wrapping of an empty parcel.

In a world where no problem is local and therefore cannot be solved locally, that of the Belgian contemporary schools of painting is but an aspect of that of the whole of the contemporary schools of art, they being themselves but the reflection of vaster and deeper problems which will find, no doubt, their resolution in the coming harmony of a renewed world the labour pains of which we are all jerkily going through at present.

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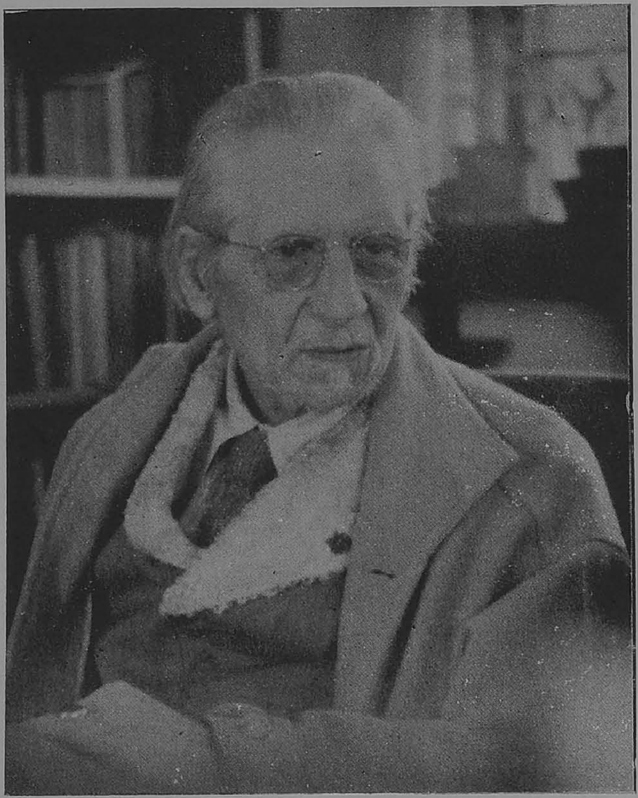
Some Recollections and References to
Dr. ANANDA COOMARASWAMY

"Chaque occupation est un sacerdoce".[1]
"Those who love their art wear themselves to a shadow with their labours over it, forgetting even to wash or eat".[2]

IN our world where isolation is in force, it is something that people recognize the Italian saying, "*Tutto il mondo é paese*"; the universe is indeed an even smaller place than these words would indicate. In each generation there are some few who go further and see beyond this external good and consider the greater unity, the "inner" man Who is common to all mankind. The rarest among us have the signal capacity to assimilate "*Una veritas in variis signis varie resplendeat*, and that this redounds *ad majorem gloriam Dei*; a glory greater by far than could be circumscribed by any creed or confined by the walls of any church or temple". (AKC). This is the arena in which Dr. Coomaraswamy's mind worked.



For almost fifty years this man was a productive participator in the intellectual and scientific circles of both the East and the West, but he was never overcome by the knowledge of this world, its minor miracles, our inventiveness, and its major promises, Utopias. When he wrote the following lines, his mode of life and thinking were above dealing with the outward appearances of things:

Contra Cartesium
That I think is proof *Thou* art
My only individuality, from whose dividuality
My postulated in-di-viduality depends.

Were the Doctor to speak himself, he might say, in utmost simplicity: "I do not know why anyone should take any notice, I did nothing on my own—I have only done my part the best way I knew how. I ought to do my work well, it is my responsibility. What I should like to emphasize is that I have never wished to build up or establish a school of thought or philosophy, and that perhaps the greatest thing I have learned is never to think for myself; I hold with André Gide that *Toutes choses sont dites déjà*. I have spent a lifetime trying to understand what has been said; taking no account of the 'inferior philosophers'. I believe with Heraclitus that the Word is common to all, and that Wisdom is to know the Will whereby all things are steered. I am convinced with Jeremias that the human cultures in all their apparent diversity are but

1. A. M. Hocart, *Les Castes*, p. 27.
2. Marcus Aurelius, V. I.

the dialects of one and the same language of the Spirit, and that there is a 'common universe of discourse' transcending the differences of tongues".

Now and again a person among us becomes proportionately renowned and yet remains untouched by high esteem. The Doctor knew the value of appreciation; he accepted it and let it serve its purpose, if it lent authority to his work, for such people to whom reputation was a form of persuasion. His was a self-assigned task, whatever may have prompted it originally, which grew into a labour of love and was done, "for the love of the work to be done". Every man's work is the profession of his faith, the depth and quality of this devotion exerts an inevitable and powerful influence on the rest of us.

The Doctor fully understood the intricacies of his craft; and what an abuse of confidence the printed word is in a superstitious literate society, where misinformation is accepted without resentment. And that the sociological doctrines he was enunciating were necessarily relatively unpopular. Nevertheless he was heard and his work leaves a great and important message to the scholars and students of the world.

Those of Coomaraswamy's views took assurance from him, others of wavering and contrary minds were persuaded more by the material presented than any skill with which it was rendered, since this man did not consider ideas as his own, he let them speak for themselves. Yet he was not averse to using an opponent's own words, differing the emphasis or the punctuation, if that would carry conviction. As he often expressed it, "I have used the tools of the present age, that is my scientific training, taking it as it was intended, seriously and without bias. I have to speak the language of my colleagues, with this added responsibility, so far as possible, I go back to original sources, I take nothing, no one for granted. A scholar who is satisfied with translations may as well use hear-say".

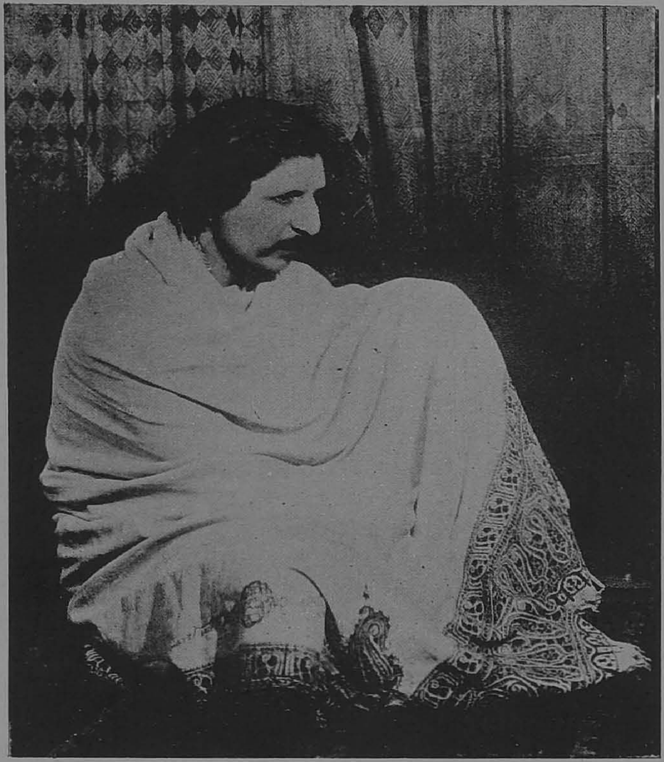
To say that anyone is born or dies at the right or wrong time is to use judgement where no one is asked to exercise it. Let the Lord blow His seed to take root when and where He wills. There always are gurus who teach by example, and professional teachers. Similarly with students, some hear and also see, others only hear. The problem is one of proportion; at all times far too many are distracted by the fog of illusion and mistake information for knowledge, and knowledge for wisdom.

Ananda Coomaraswamy was one of those teachers who gave unstintingly toward that which "no learning will avail, but only being born".[1] His was the striving of a lifetime to know the "way", and to be one with Jacob Boehme's, "Not I, the I that I am knows these things, but God knows them in me". Because all men are seekers of the "way" whether they profess it or not, it would be to the good to have something of this man's personal record: to take this material as mere biography would be to mistake the intention. We have a right to some particulars of the lives and work of distinguished and gifted people, for all that their genius pertains to a moment in time, as we experience it, *if* their "spark" belongs to eternity, their understanding to His intellectuality.

If in the Doctor's earliest writings there is an occasional trace of chauvinism and concern with politics, he very soon overcame this youthfulness. As he matured his care was with the whole of a man's need. He knew European cultures, the philosophical writings and art treasures in which both sacred and secular were still one. He had witnessed in his own lifetime how more and more materialistic and economic interests absorbed the masses and their leadership—and all other human values were obliterated. Science had pledged itself to abolish toil, poverty and war—and brought a world into an heretofore unknown "impoverished reality". Indeed a new era in which men are robbed of the possibility of producing masterpieces, where quantity and speed replace quality and the essence of the mind and heart are nullified.

As a scientist, art-historian, and metaphysician the Doctor could not but tell the truth as he saw it: "men can never be really happy unless they bear individual responsibility not only for what they do but for the kind and quality of whatever they make. Such happiness is forever denied to the majority under conditions of making that are imposed on them by what is euphemistically called 'free enterprise', that is to say, production for profit rather than

1. Jacob Boehme, that great sannyāsi of middle Europe.



ANANDA COOMARASWAMY IN HIS EARLY FORTIES

for use. What we preserve in our museums were once objects of the market place for everyone's daily use. Such things can only be made by those for whom *laborare est orare*, and this is possible only where every man can earn his living by the very work he would rather be doing than anything else in the world—a condition that has been attained in social orders integrated on the basis of vocation, *svadharma* !"

Could he admire an age of so much scientific discovery with so little spiritual nobility and bankrupt of any artistic distinction ? Nor was he at all sure that with what is left of the great Indian philosophies and the innate Indian's intelligence that he would be able to resist this Western sickness—indeed has anyone escaped contamination of this overwhelming madness—and the glib superduper five year plans ?

Such nonsense as the "vigor of European action and the serenity of Asiatic thought" never crossed his mind—when such things were brought to him he would reply that there was enough action in the East and thought in the West to serve all the requirements of life, what was wanted was a change of heart, the wish to understand and to stop longing, that is, coveting what belongs to another.

He was by no means alone in these views : Professor Whitehead of Harvard, used to say, "our leading intellects lack balance". The Earl of Portsmouth has written, "the impact of our world has brought to the East inhuman mechanistic usury, misery and heavy industry. Spiritually we have been iconoclastic, and left the altars of the broken idols empty, and for that, far more than for the fact that we have appeared as conquerors, we shall not be lightly forgiven".

Prof. La. Piana, of Harvard, has said, "what we (Americans) call our civilization is but a murderous machine with no conscience and no ideals"; Prof. Foerster of Princeton states that "we are an acquisitive society, materialistic in its interests, unhealthy in its pleasures, disillusioned in its ideals . . ." and await blindly, helplessly the coming disasters. This is barely to touch the grave problems that concern all serious Westerners.

But for its lack of humor it might be good satire—it is no easier for the East than for the West to so much as approach and try to understand one another—the fantastic eyes of Hollywood are a barrier. One can only wonder if this great hallucination is altogether chance ! It cannot be expected of a foreign student to come upon the deeper meanings of any civilization in the process of four or even six year courses of crowded professional studies in a university, or through life in the surroundings of a college campus. There are no six easy lessons that tell "all about a given culture".

Referring to himself, the Doctor might smile : "by the way, if you must say something, do not try to white-wash me. I have lived in very confused times, I have played the game as thoroughly and completely as necessity demanded. I have tried to take the pleasure and pain, what the world approves and disapproves with equilibrium. I have been neither elated by praise nor ashamed by blame. Where is the man who has not made mistakes ? To have lived in any other way would have been to evade the issue—had this not been required of me it would not have happened . . . I am not a Victorian. By meeting the conflict one comes to know the better from the worse and learns to discriminate. These indeed are times of

transition when the very contraries of which the walls of the universe are made cease to be good and evil—for we 'modern' Europeans are always pitching two evils, one against the other".

To venture to divide this man's work from his life would be a practical impossibility. Each phase, evolvement and interest was another step in extricating the Self from himself. He was not far from fifty when he came "into his own" wholeness. His attention was no longer with the knowledge *of* things, but rather with that knowing them *as*, that is, realizations. With the passing years he worked longer and harder, if possible, at first shortening his holidays and, during the war and after, taking none at all. His production and its quality was and is astonishing.

His voice had always been soft, clear and Indian, as he liked to call it; now it was even more gentle. His thick longish black hair began to turn grey. His step was firm and his posture upright, like an arrow. People were always in awe of him, in his early years because of his great erudition, and later, one simply knew that the man had outgrown his singular individuality, his one-man-depth and become *selbes gewaltic*, or in Sanskrit, *svarāṭ* . . . Self led.

We are all born infinitely bound and indebted to our ties, and this debt increases with our responsibility and capacity to fulfil our charge. Nor is this kind of duty something one can relegate to another. Having paid one's *bhakti*, (share) according to one's "station"—if one has learned to act "from impulse and not from rules" one may then begin to take leisure and liberty. I know of no one, in our immediate times, who has done his part more willingly and with better grace, or who was better prepared—to whom it was clearer that, "when a man dies he goes nowhere where he is not already".

His great vitality was given to the collecting and arranging into adequate order things that needed doing. His thoughts and writings are a sequence, or restoring or making available to us what man has contemplated, all over the world, since the Beginning. Not for the love of antiquity, but for the love of that ancient wisdom.

Outwardly he adapted himself to every situation, inwardly he retained his inner standards. Obeying his nature and what it asked of him as a living creature, he confined himself to his work, and through it learned to be oblivious to himself. He never took time out to idle. His fishing, gardening and carpentry, all of which he did remarkably well, were further forms of his discipline.

His writings were in the simplest language possible, if one takes into account the ideas treated, bringing to mind the great simplicity of the Sanskrit in the *Gītā*. To be sure, one cannot expect to read serious work without some preparation.

One illustration of interest; on an occasion the Doctor and a friend, a professor of English tried to parse one of his sentences, taken out of its context, to see whether it could have been written better or more simply. They tried various ways without satisfaction; they had to resolve that "not a comma could come out", and let it be.

I was impressed by the little paper the Doctor wasted, as compared with me; I was always rewriting my pages, and I commented on how infrequently I emptied his basket, to which he replied: "You, too, will learn, the first decades are the hardest, after that use the 'cut and paste' method". He would cut the typed lines and paste them together in the proper order, thus eliminating a great deal of copy work. He wrote notes in long hand, all other writing was done on the typewriter, more often than not, the first outline was the final copy.

When our son was about twelve years old he came upon science and skepticism, he said to his father: "Now that I know something about science I cannot believe in God". The Doctor assured him; "'A little knowledge is a very dangerous thing'. Far greater minds than your's balk at this, you do not *have to* believe. God is something that is attained only by the most lucid intellects—and that, after incredible effort. You do not hear much about it: such people keep silence. *Crede ut intelligas*, (believe that you may understand); *intellige ut credas*, (understand that you may believe); and *crede et intelligas*, (believe and *you will* understand").

Tradition will say about this man whatever suits it, some will call him a revolutionist, others a reactionary, actually he was a monarchist, who would have a king responsible for the

welfare of his realm, upon whose *dhārma* his very life depended. And to this he would add, " when men stop being at war with themselves they will not need to be at war with one another, this too depends on the maharaja's *dhārma*—for the fulfilment of the demands of such a vocation ' office-seekers ' will not do !"

So far as politics did interest him, he thought the proletarian forms of society hardly worth philosophical consideration. They were the final ends, the results of economic despair and frightful mismanagement.

His deepest sympathy was with people who were still a folk and whose artisans spoke of their heroes in language common to all, and who still create both form and spirit. For he well knew that it is not lack of art that " civilized " people suffer from, but rather lack of what this art or skill shall be used for. Man does not produce the " times ", but the few who know what is right ought to set the standards, that the many may follow and be saved from, " I don't know what is good, but I know what I like !"

There was a natural austerity about the Doctor but it was closer to asceticism than severity. For all his absorption in so many directions, he was never too busy, no one was too unimportant for him to see, and he never kept anyone waiting an instant. When he was called to dinner or the telephone, the typewriter stopped clicking in the middle of a word. When I was younger and had less *dhyana* I used to marvel at this, and I once said, " I can't bear to interrupt—now you will have all the trouble of getting back into it . . ." He replied : " No trouble, I never really come away from what I am doing ".

If a student, not in his own field of work, who was struggling to make sense of distracting ends, questioned him, he gave of himself, his fullest, sparing no pains, most generously—all the material he could excavate from his own or the museum library books, sometimes even copying out references, and giving chapter and verse for the smallest request.

Throughout his somewhat over 550 titles (and some 200 book reviews) some of which are only a page in length while others run into big books, there is a continuous thread of awareness of the tragicomedy of academic learning, and a consciousness that " the fool in man is his fundamental being for so long as he is without the Self ".

Toward the end when he was not entirely well, and his physician urged him to rest, I would remind him not to work so long, so hard, that he had done his part, and now others must do their's. His answer would be : " My business is to do His business. Remember, ' There is nothing in the three worlds, that should be done by Me, nor anything unattainable that might be attained ; yet I mingle in action ' ". (*Bhagavat Gita*, III, 22).

His last talk to the Indian students was on August 15th, 1947. He reminded them that, " Indian culture is valid not so much because it is Indian as because it *is* culture. At the same time, its special forms are adapted to a specifically Indian nature and inheritance, and they are appropriate to us in the same way that a national dress is appropriate to those who have a right to wear it. We cut a sorry figure in our foreign or hybrid clothes ; and only invite the ridicule of foreign musicians for imitating their vulgarisms, such as the harmonium.

" The younger generation of ' go-getters ' that comes to America to study, and will largely shape the course of Indian social and educational policies in the immediate future is, for the most part, as ignorant of Indian traditions and cultural values as any European might be, and sometimes even more so ; and just because of this lack of background cannot grasp the American and European problems that confront it. Freedom is the opportunity to act in accordance with one's own nature, but our leaders are already de-natured, quite as much as Lord Macaulay would have wished them to be ' a class of persons Indian in blood and colour but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect '. Because they have yet to ' discover ' India, they have not realized that the modern world is no longer an integrated culture, but an ' organized barbarism ' and a political pandemonium. They have no more the moral courage to be ' themselves '—without which they can be of little use to themselves or anyone else—than had their predecessors on whom a so-called Western education had been forcibly imposed in missionary colleges or government controlled universities.

" It will take many a long year yet for Indians to recover their spontaneity. For the

present, most of our 'educated' men are just as much as Americans dominated by the current catchwords, 'equality', 'democracy', 'progress', 'freedom', etc., without qualifying the true interpretation of such words.

"In the past, and still today, Indians have earned and deserved much of the contempt of the Europeans whom they have flattered so sincerely by an imitation of all their habits and ways of thinking. We, too, are on our way to become a nation of Śūdras, at the same time industrious and ignorant.

"Notwithstanding that 'all the precepts of philosophy refer to life', we have learnt from the modern world to despise the lover of wisdom, and to leap before we look.

"On the other hand, there are the great Indian figures, both known and unknown, who advocate forms of human association unfavourable to war; this is significant as much to the rest of the world as to India, in this age of violence. Unlike the Utopias of the modern West the Indian mind does not expect the ills of the world to be cured by planning or economics alone. Nor can the Indian mind think of 'success' in terms of money alone.

"In particular Bharatan Kumarappa's masterly work, *Capitalism, Socialism, Villagism?* gives a reasoned argument for decentralization, local self-sufficiency, small scale manufacture, and the restoration of direct personal relations between the producers and the consumers of the necessaries of life; and this involves the whole of Indian culture, since it is the natural and proper function of the arts to provide for all the needs of the whole man, as a physical and metaphysical person, at one and the same time.

"Throughout the ages, India has been a land of profound religious convictions and of equally generous religious tolerance. Here at least, it is still possible for men to think of their own faith as the natural friend and ally of all others in a common cause. It has been said of the West that religion is fast becoming an archaic and impossible refuge. But in India it still provides for both the hearts and minds of men, and gives them an inalienable dignity; and because of this, the natural connection of religion with sociology and politics has never been broken. In our experience, culture and religion have been indivisible, and that, in our inheritance is what we can least afford to abandon.

"Indian women, at the present day and in so far as they have not yet been 'brought up-to-date', are our best conservators of Indian culture. We may not forget that in a country like India, any judgement of standards of culture in terms of statistics of literacy would be absurd, literacy, in the modern world of magazines, newspapers and the radio is no guarantee of culture whatever; and it is far better not to know how to read than not to know what to read!

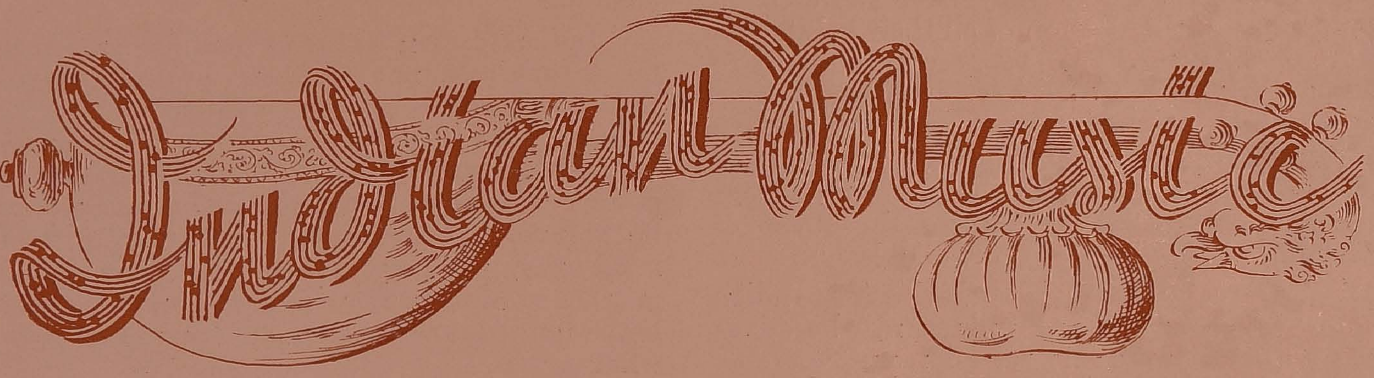
"In the meantime, also, there is an immediate and desperate need for the establishment of cultural, and not merely economic and political, contacts with the rest of the world. No doubt, the West is very largely responsible for its own cultural isolation, which amounts to a very provincialism; but the blame is ours, too, for our students and representatives abroad are more often engineers, physicists, politicians, and gospel-graspers (the swamies) than men of culture—where they ought to have been both at once, able to contribute something more than their fees to those from whom they came to learn the newest techniques.

"When the culture that we now hope will again come to life was in India, the learned men of foreign countries came from far away to study them. The measure of our culture is not that of our ability to learn new tricks, but that of what we have to share and give.

"Do not consider the inferior philosophers. Be not deceived, 'evil communications corrupt good manners'".

DOÑA LUISA COOMARASWAMY

Brookline, Mass., U.S.A.



INDIAN MUSIC is perhaps the brightest gem among the hoary land's numerous fine arts, evolved and developed to perfection through countless ages. The Indian musical system is very old and has had a continuous development from early times, its literature dating from the beginning of the Christian Era. India had a magnificent system of art music when in other parts of the world, the art was still in the stage of Folk song. The story of its evolution from dim pre-historic times to its present highly perfected form is one of absorbing interest and a study of Indian musical history reveals the genius of a meditative race which found in its raga system a method for self-expression. "Music with the Hindus is a resource to which they always fly in joy or grief, for prayer or praise".

Music was never considered purely as a form of entertainment in India and not even as a fine art but as a means of attaining the Supreme. This accounts for the large number of saints and devotees among its best exponents and composers. It is perhaps well-known that the origin of Indian music is traced back to one of the Vedas, the Sama Veda and it is itself styled the Gandharva Veda, which is one of the four upa Vedas. God is conceived of as Nāda Brahma (embodiment of sound) and the practice of music as Nādopāsana (meditation through music).

The sources providing material for tracing the musical history of India are both varied and extensive, as works on music in Sanskrit and other Indian languages continued to be written during the last 2,500 years. A list compiled in the early years of this century contains no less than 97 works in Sanskrit alone, many of them being attributed to ancient Rishis (sages) of India. These references throw a flood of light on various musical topics of the past, such as scales, ragas and other musical forms that were in vogue in the concert parties of the respective periods. They also enable us to divide the history of Indian music into three main periods, ancient, medieval and modern.

One of the most ancient system of music in India was the musical system of the ancient Tamils in the extreme south of India. Although this system is practically extinct at present, valuable references pertaining to it are available from ancient Tamil works like the Silappadikaram (2nd century A.D.), Tolkappiyam and Kalladam, from inscriptions,

and from individual treatises on Tamil music. These references show that the Tamils were a highly musical people, had a fairly well-developed system of music and were familiar with the *solfa* method, concordant and discordant notes and other acoustic phenomena. Their scales or modes were known as "pālais" and the equivalent of the modern rāgā as a "pann".

Till about the 13th century A.D. there was practically a single system of music followed throughout the length and breadth of India, with natural local variations. The "Sangita Ratnakara" of Sarnga Deva, one of the most authoritative works on Indian music written before 1,250 A.D. does not make mention of a bifurcation of Indian music into the two systems, Karnatic and Hindusthani. These terms are found for the first time in the "Sangita Sudhākara" of Haripala written in the 14th century A.D. The "Gita Govinda" of Jayadeva (12th century), the first of the Indian operas containing the earliest regular musical compositions now extant, is a work written before (the bifurcation) of the two systems came into being. The cleavage into North Indian (Hindusthani) and South Indian (Karnatic) came into vogue after the advent of the Muslims in Delhi; and the former system became more pronounced during the reign of the Moghul Emperors. The music of the North began to develop along fresh channels due to contact with Persian and Arabic styles while the music of South India continued to develop along traditional lines, undisturbed by foreign influences. These sub-systems of music are, however, in keeping with the genius of the Indian people.

Only two systems of music are possible, one in which there is progress by successions of single notes (known as the melodical system) and the other in which the music progresses by groups of notes called chords (known as the harmonical system). The former prevails in oriental countries, and Indian music is the finest example of a true melodic system of music. It is the genius of India that contributed to the world its raga system, which is perhaps the highest peak to which a melodic system of music could reach.

The seven notes, which are the basis of all systems of music are called *svaras* in Indian music and are known by the following signs:—

Shadja	– Sa	– Do
Rishaba	– Ri	– Re
Gandhara	– Ga	– Mi
Madhyama	– Ma	– Fa
Panchama	– Pa	– So
Dhaivata	– Dha	– La
Nishada	– Ni	– Si

In practical music, these notes are further divided into twelve semi-tones and later into twenty-two quarter-tones (*srutis*) many of which are used even by the average musician in South India. Far from being artificial divisions, these quarter-tones are the natural outcome of modal shifts, and as the only system using so many of them in everyday music, Karnatic music lays claim to the highest degree of musical perfection.

The outstanding feature of Karnatic (or Hindusthani) music is its raga system in the concept of which, the ideal of "absolute music" is reached. The traditional description of "raga" is "that which is beautified by the tonal excellence of *svarās* and *varnās* and which gives pleasure to the mind of the listener". The modern conception of a raga dates from the time of Matanga Muni (5th century A.D.) although earlier works mention it as *jati*. As such, some of the present day ragas have come down to us practically unchanged for over 2,000 years. Many scholars in the past have worked out ingenious methods to formulate a complete scheme of these ragas and the outstanding contribution in this direction was made by a great musical research scholar called Venkatamakhi whose scheme of 72 Melakarta Ragas (parent ragas) was enunciated in his work "Chaturdandi Prakasika" in 1660 A.D. revolutionised the development of Karnatic music. Venkatamakhi's scheme opened out new vistas of raga creation and later geniuses like Tyagaraja invented many a beautiful raga by following it.

There were several varieties of ancient musical forms like Prabandhas, etc. which gradually disappeared with the efflux of time giving way to the "Kirtana" and the "Kriti". The *kriti* composition is the pinnacle of musical excellence in Karnatic music and is the most highly evolved amongst art musical forms. Although conceived about five centuries ago, the *kriti* appeared in its fully developed form early in nineteenth century and is so popular today that more than half the time at a modern concert is taken up in the rendering of *kritis*.

South India had a succession of brilliant and prolific composers who enriched Karnatic music with thousands of compositions. The earlier composers were Purandara Vittala, Talapakkam Chinnayya, Narayana Tirtha and Bhadrachala Ramadas. Purandara Vittala is veritably the Father of Karnatic music as he wrote for the first time hundreds of graded exercises to teach music in a systematic form.

The period 1750-1850 was the Golden Age of music throughout the world, and, South India witnessed a great renaissance of the art. It was during this period that the great Trinity of Karnatic Music, Tyagaraja, Muthuswamy Dikshitar, and Syama Sastri flourished in South India shedding lustre on the art by their compositions. By a curious coincidence they were not only contemporaries of each other but were contemporaries of Beethoven, Mozart, Wagner and Haydn, great names in European music. They also lived in the vicinity of Tanjore, thus making it the home of traditional Karnatic music. All three of them were scholarly Brahmins of the deeply devotional type and veritably lived for the sake of their art which they dedicated to the divinities they worshipped.

In Tyagaraja (1759-1847) Karnatic music found all that was beautiful and sublime in it. His is a name to conjure with in more fields than one. Besides being a brilliant composer of music, he was a poet, seer and Bhakte (devotee) of a very high order. He was one of the greatest singers of all times and "since his day, melody has become more rhythmical, flowing and graceful". An innovation introduced by him in his compositions changed the very nature of musical compositions in the post-Tyagaraja period. He was the first to discover the possibilities of "sangatis" (variations) in musical compositions and to introduce a set of them in each of his pieces. Being a gifted poet in Sanskrit and Telugu he made his songs poems set to music. This colourful and saintly personality bequeathed to the musical world nearly a thousand of such compositions, two operas and a tradition which represented all that was best in music.

Muthuswamy Dikshitar (1775-1835) was a learned composer who wrote scholarly songs in Sanskrit. His style which represents a solid and substantial type of music in slow tempo, is one of intellectual loftiness and appeals only to the discerning few.

Syama Sastri (1763-1827) was a sweet bard who composed appealing kritis in simple language but in intricate time-measures; "and it is considered a rare accomplishment", for a musician to be able to sing a few of his pieces correctly.

Another immortal composer who left his indelible imprint on Karnatic music was Kshetrajna (17th century) who composed several thousands of pieces called "padams". These compositions are lilting melodies in slow tempo mostly replete with the spirit of the raga and as a rule with a romantic theme.

A galaxy of composers in the post-Tyagaraja period kept the banner of Karnatic music flying high, and the prominent among them were Vina Kuppayyar, Patnam Subrahmanya Iyer, Ponniah Pillai and Ramnad Srinivasa Iyengar. A noteworthy feature is that although they were all Tamilians, their compositions are in Telugu, which had by then become the language of music in South India.

The guru-sishya (teacher-pupil)method of teaching was the only system of musical teaching adopted in Karnatic music in the past and as a result, the recording of musical ideas in notation still remains

THE TREE — *Karl Kasmann*

in a rudimentary form. Early in this century, attempts were made to publish Indian melodies in the staff notation of European music and only partial success was achieved as some of the subtle graces of Karnatic music were not capable of reproduction in notation.

Recent trends in Karnatic music show a disinclination on the part of musicians and audiences towards the heavy type of classical music and there is a perceptible swing to light music. Various influences like the gradual disappearance of the traditional method of teaching and the advent of films and the radio have played their part in this gradual deterioration in standards of music. A few composers like Papanasam Sivan, and a few vocalists of the orthodox type like Tiger Varadachariar, Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar, Maharajapuram Viswanatha Iyer and Madura Mani Iyer are keeping the classical style of music going. Among instrumentalists, Rajarathnam Pillai for Nagaswaram (pipe) Rajamanickam Pillai, Venkataswami Naidu and Papa Venkatarama Iyer (violin) Palladam Sangara Rao (flute) Karaikudi Sambasiva Iyer (veena) and Palghat Mani Iyer (Mridangam or drum) merit prominent mention.

Coming to North Indian music, the classification of Ragas was according to the ancient system of Indian music which recognised six broad groups called Primary Ragas or Janaka Ragas. Each Primary Raga had five Raginies or female counterparts which bore close relationship or similarity with the respective primary Ragas, and each of these again had six Subsidiary Ragas or Putras as they were called derived from the Mother Ragas with delicate variations. Thus originally the Ragas numbered two hundred and sixteen. But they did not stop there. As time passed great musical masterminds introduced several subtle variations into them and new Ragas were innovated, so that today we have over eight hundred Raga Raginies each with a distinct melodic form. But actually there are not perhaps more than about three hundred of them that are being handled and elaborated either in North or South India today. The late revered Pandit Bhathkande of Bombay the well known musician and codifier after prodigious labour and research attempted to classify the Hindusthani Ragas into ten groups called the "Thats" by which all the Ragas extant were grouped according to their Chayas (shades) or aesthetic characteristics. Latterly however after meeting and discussing with master musicians of South India he recognised the soundness and validity of Venkatamuktu's classification of 72 Melokartas.

It was during the reign of Moghul Emperors in North India, the Persian and Arabic influence over art became very pronounced and led to the growth of a mixed style very distinct from that of the Karnatic music. Though during the time of the earlier Muhammadan kings the art of music was neglected, it was very highly encouraged during the reigns of Burhamkhan, Babar, Humayun, Akbar and Shah-Jahan. Babar himself was a skilful artiste ; and a talented group of musicians were gathered in his Court among whom Hafiz Haji and Jalaludin Muhammad were very famous. It was in the reign of Akbar that the art of North Indian music reached its zenith. Who has not heard of the foremost musician of Akbar's Court, Mian Tan Sen ? Abul Fazal says "a singer like Tan Sen has not been in India for the last thousand years". Tan Sen was the originator of Drupad, the highest type of classical Hindusthani music. He has left us a rich legacy of his Drupad compositions and he was equally great as a vocalist and as a *Sitar* player. Many ancestors are told about his art exposition and one story goes that when he sang on the banks of the Jumna fishes used to jump out of the river on to the land and lie as if dazed. Another story goes that when he sang Rag Dipak one day in Akbar's Court flames shot up all round and could not be put out until Rag Megh (meaning cloud) was sung. His music Guru Haridas Swami, both as a musician and saint, takes the same place as Tyagaraja in the South. Among other musicians of Akbar's time, may be mentioned Mahapatro, and Baksh Tulasi, and the famous devotee Mira bai.

Shah Jahan was no less a lover and patron of music than his illustrious grandfather Akbar. Himself a talented singer, composed many songs in Hindi admirable in style and sentiment. Famous musicians like Jagannath Kaviraj, Brlas Khan, Lal Khan, Gura Samudra, and Dirang Khan adorned the Court of Shah Jahan. It was during the time of Aurangazeb that North Indian music was for the first time systematised in a book called Sangita Pārigata by Pandit Ahobala (1659) who is also the author of Anupama Sangita Ratnakara a monumental treatise on North Indian music.

In the North even as in the South there exist several kinds of musical forms each distinct in style and effects: Drupad, Khayal, Tumri, Quovali, Tappe, Hori and there are the popular Bhajans and Gazals.

Drupad is considered to be the highest type of classical rendering of music and is very highly respected. But perhaps of its heaviness and intricacies of laya (time-measures) its exponents have dwindled and Khayal has taken its place.

Khayal is a modification of Drupad popularised by Sadarang and Adarang, descendants of Tan Sen and prominent Court musicians of Emperor Muhammad Shah (1719-48) one of the greatest exponents of Khayal in the recent past was Khan Sahib Abdul Karim who for nearly three decades thrilled the audience in the North and in the South with his matchless mellifluous voice which carried the day in all the music conferences in the country.

Tumri is a style of music suggesting feminine grace and the dancers of Khatak (a variety of dance) resorted to it for emotional expression and abhinaya. King Wazid Ali Shah of Lucknow was one of the renowned composers of Tumri.

Quovali is a type of song, an adaptation of the Kirtan popularised by the well-known poet and composer Amir Khusru. Its special feature is the flights of *tans* in quick time-measure and balanced rhythms.

Tappa, a type of music well-known at one time owed its origin to Gulam Nabi. It is an adaptation of the folk song of the camel drivers of the Punjab.

Hori is a type of song sung in connection with the most popular of festival in upper India, the Holi; and as a background music for group dancing it is very charming.

Then there are the popular Bhajans, purely devotional songs, and the Gazals, generally erotic but occasionally didactic. They are most popular among lay listeners and votaries of sensuous pleasures.

Among the hoop of Hindusthani musicians that enchant and inspire lovers of classical music today, mention must be made of Fyaz Khan of Baroda, Gulam Ali Khan of Lucknow, Cemkarnath of Bombay, Rair Sankar of Delhi, and of the female artistes Roshnara Begum and Kesari Bai of Bombay are names to conjure with.

It is a happy augury of the times that more and more interest is being taken in recent years by genuine music lovers and Music Conferences in the North and in the South in bringing together the best of both and enable them to understand and appreciate each other. Both the systems of music, the Hindusthani and the Karnatic having drawn their inspiration from a common source, we recognise their fundamental unity and it is well worth making a research to find out why, when and how the difference between the two arose and make every attempt to bridge the gulf, if gulf there be, and try to co-ordinate both into one system—the system of Indian music.

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Rāgā is a melodious arrangement of musical notes in an octave so made as to express a definite mood. The word Raga is derived from Ranjs=to please, aesthetic pleasure being implied.

Thāt may be taken to mean Mode.

Melakarta, parent scale.

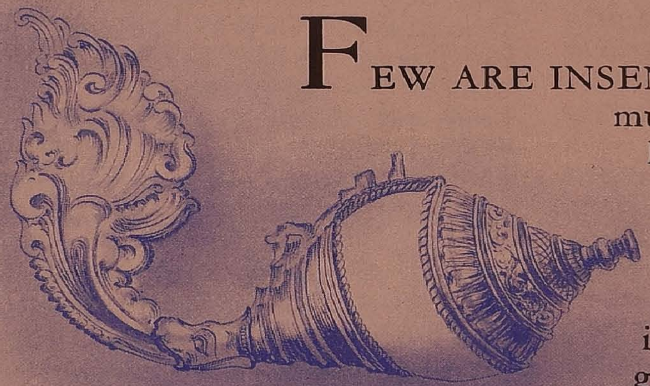
Tan is a rythmical ascent or descent in steps of two or three or more notes of a scale so as to produce with the help of vowel sounds the melodic combination.

Abhinaya—expression by monument, the sentiment expressed by a song.

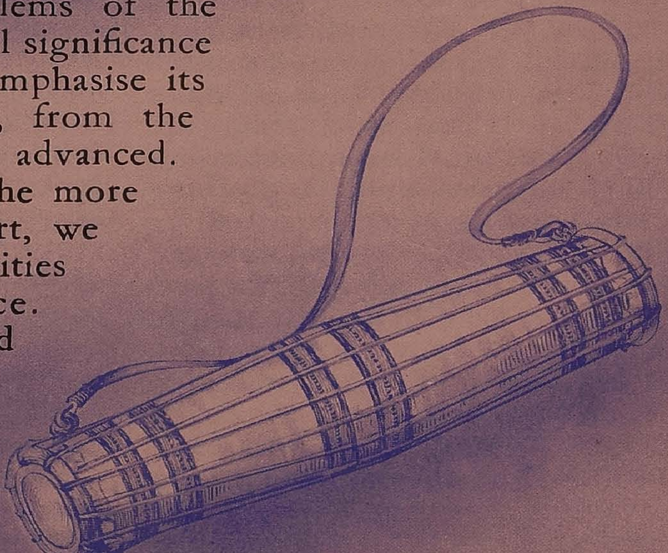
Alāp—improvisation of a Rāgā theme.

Sruti (quarter-tone) is the microtonal interval between two successive scale notes.

The Development of Musical Understanding



FEW ARE INSENSIBLE to the emotional effect of musical sounds. Making music, or listening to music, we are stirred: when light music combines with food and drink to give us a sense of physical well-being, or, more profoundly, when we respond inwardly to the sublimity of great composers and performers.



Leaving to others the problems of the psychological origins and social significance of music it suffices here to emphasise its universality among all races, from the most primitive to the most advanced. When we cultivate one of the more advanced forms of musical art, we are apt to overlook its affinities with savage song and dance.

The purpose of nurture and education is to realise the higher potentialities of the individual, and in this process art, including musical art, must find a place. And to be effective, any part of an individual's education must be based upon sound principles. For music, it may perhaps be contended that recognition should be given to the evolutionary nature of the art itself as well as to the development—*pari passu* with that of other faculties—of the music-making and music-appreciating capacity in a

person from early childhood. To a very large extent, these two principles are one, because individual development is broadly analogous to that of the race. Just as dance and ballad are the most primitive forms of music—or are the most primitive arts from which " pure " music has evolved—so in the child we find that pleasure in singing a phrase—especially if in simple rhyme—or to dance and to utter semi-musical chant-like sounds are among the features of earliest play, from the age of two or three years. Parents often ironically allude to their offspring as young savages, and this irony is but an aspect of truth, for nurture refines the savagery and realises the aptitudes for civilised life. It is clearly important that upbringing, and the earliest formal education should not neglect at any stage this capacity for making and enjoying music, either " pure " or combined with words, action or dancing. Discontinuity of development, or an attempt to accelerate it, must deform or stunt the growing faculty, and even lead to abhorrence of an art which can provide so much enjoyment and satisfaction. Thus the powers of musical appreciation and performance should be continuously exercised from earliest childhood into mature life.

Musical education and musical understanding therefore have their roots in the home, for here are implanted the germs of all knowledge. In these early years, the correct environment provides opportunities for the child to hear and produce the kind of music it is capable of comprehending. It is not sufficient simply to allow the young mind to hear adults performing *their* music. Some complexity is beyond its mental reach, and although the novelty and variety of musical sounds may briefly attract, attention soon wanders. But a young child will soon appreciate the enhanced pleasure derived from the union of poetry and melody when its nursery rhymes are sung to simple tunes ; and may begin its career as a musical performer singing with or to others of its age. From about the fifth or sixth year, whilst the sense of pitch is still imperfect, different rhythms can be recognised and reproduced. This is the justification for the percussion band, often formed in western schools for children of these ages. In this, with drums, tambourines and bells, boys and girls beat time to tunes played by their teacher on a pianoforte, thus acquiring a sharpened sense of rhythm which is invaluable later.

At the age of eight or nine pitch can be identified aurally and reproduced. Increasing manual dexterity enables instrumental music, other than percussive, to be begun, and the voice may be more fully exercised. But what kind of instrumental and vocal music should be chosen ? Surely, whilst the mind is yet immature, the music of the race's youth, from the storehouse of tradition. From the past of both East and West has been transmitted a great wealth of folk music. Overlooked until recently by musicians, it has been and is still being discovered and published. Sung in unison, or in two-part settings, e.g., with descant, these melodies of simple life can never fail to charm performer and hearer. In the realm of instrumental music, it is proper to turn to " pipe and tabor ". Particularly in the West, the instruments in current musical use are complex and the product of a long process of development from their ultimate origins, the reed-pipe and the lute. It is clearly undesirable to attempt to practise relatively primitive vocal music simultaneously with modern instruments. Hence those having aptitude at this stage are best introduced to the precursors of modern orchestral instruments, or to their equivalents fashioned by the modern manufacturer. Thus, before giving the young instrumentalist a flute, let him first learn to play a bamboo pipe, and if he is skilful with tools, let him cut his own pipes, like a shepherd boy seeking for diversion to enliven lonely hours of watching. I am not aware if simple stringed instruments have been employed in schools, before beginning violin or 'cello lessons; but a school orchestra formed for children of this age might well include lute and pipe-players, with percussion instruments, and might perform simple compositions in the various styles of western music. The need to recreate the early stages of musical development is obviated in oriental music, because the instruments used are relatively simple, having evolved less far from their primitive state.

It is at and from this stage in Western musical education that problems beset teacher and pupil. It is generally agreed that instruments having great musical potentialities, like the violin and piano demand exacting training from quite an early age, possibly nine years. Regular tuition and practice absorb much time, and there is the risk that other aspects of education may be neglected. Equally serious, musical training may itself become narrowly specialised. It appears to be particularly easy to confuse musical education with learning to play the pianoforte, and this instrument, or perhaps the mass-manufacturers of it, have to meet an indictment of utmost gravity. Very versatile, it can be used for compositions of a most finished order, alone or in combinations. It provides effective accompaniment for a single voice or the choir. It is a mechanical contrivance of the most ingenious kind, and fifty years ago it became in England the symbol of social respectability. The artisan or lower middle class father might well be forgiven for buying a piano and concluding to his own satisfaction that he was getting the best possible value for money in music. How many unfortunate children, without previous introduction to musical performance, and without accompanying instruction in music as an art, have been compelled to spend long hours toiling at repugnant practice, all enjoyment denied because their playing has been conceived as an isolated achievement and not as a stage in developing musical understanding gradually'. Is it not surprising that after a few years, and perhaps with a few examination certificates, they turned away in disgust and told their friends that they were non-musical ?

But the situation has changed. The trade in cheap pianos has declined, and many homes no longer contain one. Instead, we find the radiogram. It is not certain whether this has been gain without loss. Well, but not perfectly reproduced music of every kind can be heard in comfort, and the talks on musical appreciation given from most broadcasting stations have increased the demand for orchestral music. But to confine interest in music merely to listening is unwarrantably passive. A sharp differentiation between performers and listeners may well imperil the place of music in the life of the community, because passive listeners may readily be diverted to other forms of entertainment, especially when television sets become common. People are encouraged all the more to become passive listeners by the constantly-rising standards of professional technique. But the best listener is he who has some experience of performing. And the best performer is also a keen listener of other performers and performances. The danger is that professional and specialist training should become divorced from general education, and amateur music-making degenerate into mere listening. Fortunately, in Western schools musical instruction tends to diversify. Courses in musical appreciation, employing gramophone and wireless receiver, together with school choir and orchestra, provide opportunities for both performing and listening under good guidance. Thus in later school years future professional musicians and amateurs can receive good all-round instruction.

The problems of Ceylon are similar to those of the West ; but far more acute. Living performances of the highest quality —both of oriental and western music—are extremely rare. The recorded version, their substitute, loses authenticity during impression on the wax disc or steel tape, in transmission and in reception. All the essential qualities of western orchestral music are frequently lacking in the emissions of loud-speaker or gramophone ; what the listener hears might well be provided by two or three harmoniums. Music, as part of a general education, is commonly neglected, and instead, large numbers of girls are driven like sheep to the slaughter of the specialised pianoforte examination. It is notorious that once married they never play a note. This system is perpetuated because the best candidates gain scholarships, go to England, obtain a diploma in pianoforte playing and return to prepare the next generation for the same examinations. We clearly need fewer examiners and scholarships and more teachers of singing, stringed instruments and musical history. We need also persons qualified to impart the beginnings of musical training

to young children. Thus can musical education become continuous, progressive and diversified. Only then will there be musicians in this island, and a genuine musical culture.

It remains to indicate the possibilities of deepening musical understanding in years beyond those of adolescence and early maturity, when to the years of rapid advance in musical attainments succeed broadening comprehension and deeper experience of living. For while we are in our twenties many of the finest and subtlest qualities of musical art escape both performer and listener. A mature musician, listening to a student orchestra, will often discern a combination of excellent technique and imperfect understanding. I remember once listening to a choral and orchestral concert by students at Cambridge, which included works by several composers. The standard was high throughout ; but it was not until the end, during the performance of choruses from "Prince Igor" that technique and understanding were matched. The choir suddenly was inspired, the spell of these brilliant, emotional, animated works seized both performers and listeners. The intentions of composer and conductor were fully realised. Doubtless for many performers, as well as listeners, those choruses had attained a standard of musical performance fairly to be regarded as perfect, in that singing and playing were vitalised by the true spirit of music.

It must be remembered that apart from the early works of western masters—mainly of historical interest—their compositions are the product of deep human experience, and it can hardly be expected that this musical experience can be re-realised in performer, and through performer, in the hearer, except in the context of full adulthood. Thus the musical art yields its ultimate rewards by constant application. It is by repeated listening to particular composers, works and executants, and above all by the constant cultivation of our own musical talent, that the deeper mysteries of the later Beethoven or Brahms, or the best oriental music, are disclosed.

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Navaratne Ring & its Significance

A DAGOBA is a dome shaped Buddhist monument built of regular brick courses and surmounted by a square relic chamber. Some of the personal ornaments of the builders are deposited in the chamber during the ceremony performed at its closing. Many dagobas have fallen into decay and, at times, articles of great interest are found among the ruins.

When clearing the brick rubbish surrounding the Yathala dagoba built in the third century B.C., at Tissa in South Ceylon, the greater part of a thin carnelian which had been set on a signet ring was found. The persons who rifled the relic chamber apparently wanted only the gold setting and broke and rejected the stone. On the portion found, the figure of a man sitting on a chair is engraved in intaglio. Winding stems ending in flowers appear at the right-hand of the figure.

Masculine figures holding leaf and flower designs are characteristic of deities carved on stone slabs flanking entrances to ancient buildings. The deities are demon scarers. The demons stand at doors waiting to gain entry or lie in wait at street corners to do harm. The design on the carnelian gem represented a guardian deity and the signet ring was worn as an amulet.

In the second century B.C. a new technique penetrated. The centre hall of the *Lova-maha-paya* or the brazen palace, built in the capital city of Anuradhapura, was decorated with the emblem of the sun in gold, the moon in silver and the stars in pearls. Various kinds of precious stones had been found in a profusion at different localities. The guardian deity of the Tissa carnelian gem rapidly became a jewel and a precious stone of a particular colour symbolised a planet.

The representation of a planet by means of a distinctive colour formed a part of the religious art of ancient Chaldea. The Assyrians who subdued the Chaldeans, assimilated their religion and built storied temples to the planets. The external decoration of each story changed its colour according to the colour of the planet to which the story was dedicated, thus:—first story, white, Venus; second, black, Saturn; third, red, Mars; fourth, blue, Mercury; fifth, orange, Jupiter; sixth, silver grey, the moon and the seventh, golden yellow, the sun. In Ceylon the colours of the precious stones which symbolise the first six planets are similar to those used on the Assyrian temple. Coral-red typify Mars and ruby-red, not golden yellow, the sun.

Some planets were observed in more than one form and the colour of each noted. Venus, the symbol of which is a diamond,

has a dual personality. A stone of a coral-red tint signifies the lone star first to rise in the evening. The emblem of the star which hails the sun is a saffron yellow diamond. Tri-form Luna is represented by three different kinds of stones. A jacinth denotes the waxing moon or Rahu; the pearl symbolise the moon at full and the emblem of Ketu or the waning moon is a dark coloured cat's-eye. The moon is reckoned as three planets which total nine.

A planet is conceived as an anthropomorphic god and the stone which represents him is his magical image. The stone acquired a potency which counteracted his evil qualities. Saturn, whose colour is black, is avaricious, deceptive and dishonourable. He rides the heavens on a vulture. His evil influences which last for nineteen years are modified with offerings of food to the crows and by wearing a black sapphire set on an iron finger ring. In Sinhala, the term in use for the stone is *káku-nila,* the crow sapphire. The genie of the ring is commanded by certain business men and for luck at games of chance. The ring is worn in India for three days from a Saturday, which is sacred to Saturn. If within that period any mishap befalls the wearer, the ring is offered on Tuesday to a Brahamin.

Rahu is a complex concept with a parallel which might be traced to ancient Egypt. The god Sahu ruled the mysterious world. Perhaps the most ancient of the innumerable accounts of the gods and goddesses of Egypt represented him as a wild hunter. He devoured the fortunes of the chase in the world above, at noon the sun-god and for supper the moon and the planet gods. As each god was assimilated by him, its most precious virtues were transfused into himself. Rahu journeys forth clockwise in the zodiacal houses and meet vis-a-vis other planets, all of which travel anti-clockwise. In each house, he acquires in an exalted degree the qualities of any planet which is in that house. Astrology attributes to Rahu qualities similar to the main functions of the god Sahu in the Egyptian heavens.

Once upon a time in India, the waxing moon or Rahu was Pingaksha. He gave his life to save some harmless but wealthy travellers from his uncle's murderous designs. He was rewarded for his gallantry by a place in the sky. Pingaksha is not the cannibal of the heavens. That function was transferred over to a dragon. Sometimes the prey is killed with the poison sting at the end of the dragon's tail. The dragon's mouth is Rahu, the devourer, and the tail is termed Ketu.

The evil planetary influences of Rahu are digestive ailments, nausea or a tendency to throw out the food. They are alleviated in the wearer of a composite finger ring of five metals, which in turn signify six planets. The alchemists denoted the six movable planets by similar metals. Gold represents the sun; silver, the moon; iron, Saturn and lead, Mercury. The fifth metal is bronze, the reddish brown alloy of copper and tin which symbolise Jupiter and Venus respectively. The reddish brown colour denotes the dead Mars, who had been laid low already with the poison sting on the dragon's tail. While alive, the colour of Mars was coral-red like fire in which condition he was not food suitable for the devourer. The evil aspects of Ketu bring about red apparitions and dysentery. He is propitiated in some parts of India with fire sacrifices. The adverse effects of Rahu and Mars combined are violent tempers which lead into bloody feuds.

The finger ring worn in order to counteract the evil influences either of Rahu or Ketu is designed in the form of the coil of a cobra with the hood expanded and projecting out horizontally. The cinnamon garnet or a yellowish variety of zircon sometimes takes the place of the jacinth, which is Rahu's stone. Some prefer the carbuncle (garnet), which acts as a charm against evil spirits, to the dark coloured cat's-eye which normally symbolise Ketu.

Finger rings are constructed individually for Saturn, Rahu or Ketu. When the evil effects of Saturn and Ketu are present simultaneously, a two-coil cobra finger ring is worn. The hood is represented by an oval shaped cat's-eye and on either side of it two black sapphires denote the cruel, gleaming eyes. The design is very striking and the ring is invested with a mysterious charm. Three-coil rings are

not constructed. Perhaps, a patient suffering from the combined bad effects of Rahu and Ketu and treated by a physician who possesses the dishonourable qualities of Saturn, is not expected to survive. There might be a measure of truth in some of these beliefs, but the evidence on which they are based is totally inadequate.

Whenever a talisman of good fortune to be invoked at all propitious moments is required, a nine gem finger ring or the Navaratne is constructed and worn. The stones are set as a horoscopic square or a chart of the heavens in which the ruby, symbolic of the sun, occupies the centre. In order of precedence to the east is Venus, the diamond ; to the south-east the moon at full, a pearl ; to the south, Mars, the coral ; the south-west a waxing moon, the jacinth ; to the west, Saturn, the black sapphire ; to the north-west, Mercury, the blue sapphire ; to the north a waning moon, the cat's-eye ; and to the north-east, Jupiter is represented by a topaz.

Each stone is set at an appointed time which is determined on the movements of the particular planet from its position in the horoscopic square at the time of birth. Such a moment does not occur frequently, sometimes it comes once in a week or in a month. The construction of the ring is delayed for a lengthy period. The orthodox setting is not adhered to and the colour or quality of each stone varies a good deal. Few can afford to purchase nine valuable gems. The jewel is set in various beautiful designs on rings, brooches, ear-rings and hair pins. Sometimes the design is four-rayed and on each ray there are nine gems.

The planetary character of the ring is obscured to some extent in the *Námástaya* and the *Navaratne,* a text-book compiled for use in the schools of Ceylon. The book contains a stanza from the *Jyotirvidabarana,* a treatise in Sanskrit by an Indian writer on astrology. The stanza refers to the nine reputed scholars of the court of the lord of men, the mythical King Vikkramaditiya. The learned men include Dhanvantari, Samku, Kálidasa and Varahamíra and each of them still maintain a reputation in his respective branch of arts or science. Normally, a king is the central figure of the court. In an analogy, the emblem which signifies him must occupy the centre. That emblem does not exist in the Navaratne of the poet. Moreover, three scholars are represented by the gems which symbolise Saturn, Rahu and Ketu, who have never been regarded with generous feelings.

The astrological popularity which the stanza obtained for the Navaratne ring outshines the wider significance conveyed by the beautiful jewel. The inner eye of the East sees something beyond the form, and experiences something more than the mere sensation of enjoying the sight of physical beauty which is an illusion (*máya*). Nearly always Eastern art was devoted to religious ends and expected to show an attempt to inspire religious feelings. The Navaratne is a remarkable example of symbolic religious art and an epitome of Hindu and Buddhist philosophy.

When the god Mahadeva and the goddess Parvati were interrupted, the nine gems dropped from the anklet of the goddess and Shiva beheld his likeness in each of them. The Hindu triad is Brahma, the god of gods ; Vishnu, the preserver and Shiva or Isvara, the destroyer. A great cosmic cycle begins in a night of utter darkness in which Brahma wakes from his sleep and rises from his bed, a lotus bloom which floats on a bottomless sea. He creates the suns and countless constellations which Vishnu sustains and Shiva finally destroys. In a special sense the triad is Surya, the sun-god. The triad, the great cycle and the sun-god are worshipped with the ruby.

Lord Krishna is a divine boy miraculously conceived in the womb of Devari. He is the son of man and the son of god. He confounds other gods and advises princes. He who worships him with rubies will be born an emperor, and if with a small ruby, a king. The ruby is divided into the four Indian castes, namely the Brahamin, Kshatriya, Vaisya, and the Sudra. The stone used for worship is the Brahamin or the true ruby. The others are varieties of spinel.

There are eight regents at the cardinal points. From the east and moving clockwise, they are Indra, Agni, Yama, Nirut, Varuna, Váyu, Kuvera and Isána. The

stones in the orthodox setting are sacred to the regents in their respective order. The regents are the planetary guardians of an octagonal earth. Each controls one of the first eight of the twelve zodiacal houses in the horoscopic square. The first is the house of nativity; the main function of the guardian of the seventh is to carve on one's forehead at birth the initials of the future marriage partner; over the eighth, the house of death, Yama, the god of the underworld presides.

According to authorities, some of the planetary guardians are pre-Vedic and indigenous to India. The view expressed in the Buddhist books is that they were born of the subtleties of theological and metaphysical speculation which smothered the pure doctrine of an earlier Buddha. History is too young to have noted the origins of his era, and archaeology does not know the time. Just as in the example of the concept of Rahu, some of the guardians might be traced to their parallels in Egypt. About the period of time during which the Vedic thought was said to have been conceived in India, an Egyptian conqueror overran all Asia up to the banks of the river Indus, or according to some, up to the Ganges.

The ancient Egyptians believed that when a man died, his spirit, the counterpart of the body, lived on in an underworld, a world conceived to be similar in all respects to that from which the dead man had departed. In the Hall of the Negative Confession of the Egyptian underworld, presided over by assessors, the scales decide what the next world of the suppliant is to be like. If the balance is on the merit (*púnya*) side, the life will be happy, but if sin (*pápa*) is the heavier, the new life will be one of poverty and misery. The suppliant addresses the first assessor "Oh thou of long strides". In the Vedic hymns, Indra speaks, "I am invoked by steed possessing men when pressed hard in battle. I am the mighty one who stirs up the fight and whirls up the dust in my overwhelming strength". The third assessor is addressed, "Oh thou of the nose". An attribute of Varuna in Rg-Veda VII, 87.2 is ". . . and the storm in his breath". The similarity of ideas which found expression in the spoken words does not strike the lay mind as if those thoughts developed independently in each of the two widely separated areas, namely Egypt and India, governed by different economic or climatic conditions.

In the Mahabharata, the deeds of might attributed to Indra are now transferred to Vishnu and in some cases to Shiva. Shiva and Varuna are both lords of punishment. The stone sacred to one is sacred to each of his attributes and re-incarnations. Any one starting with a belief that one of the nine gems is sacred to a particular god might find authority in support of that belief. Some of the recorded Vedic thought was not an independent venture of the Indian mind. There were direct borrowings from foreign sources and later, the sources of inspiration were lost. Commentators then strained their language to make it consistent with their own special doctrines. Whichever might be the reason, the symbolism of the Hindu Navaratne is endless and very confusing.

The story of the Buddhist Navaratne is simple and its significance is clear. The *Vinaya* or the code of Buddhist rules, limits the decorative patterns in a temple to floral and foliated designs. The rule is attributed to the Buddha. The patterns, painted in three colours, are meandering leaf and eight petalled lotus designs. The lotus design never changed. The Navaratne is in the form of an eight-rayed lotus bloom. The finger ring of the type is worn in Burma. A saffron yellow diamond which represented Venus, the morning star, occupies the centre. A parti-coloured stone is not used for the purpose and a well formed octahedral crystal of the gem is highly prized. The colour or order of precedence of the other eight stones is unimportant. The saffron yellow diamond intends to signify the Buddha or sacred to him. The particular stone might have been selected for the reason that in Asoka's temple at Buddha Gaya of the third century B.C., the Vajrásana or the diamond throne was the seat of the Buddha.

His doctrine was not original. By his own intuition, he re-discovered the old truths preached by an earlier Buddha and which were hidden in the night of the dark ages. He was logical, not theological and

therefore never at loggerheads with common sense. A discussion on magical images or cosmologies was profitless. The beliefs were traditional or ingrained in man and could not be eradicated. They were transformed by the Buddha into a rational approach towards life which culminated in a most sublime intellectual idealism.

The teaching was in three stages and the latter two are symbolised, in turn, in the eight-rayed lotus finger ring. The first is the story of a man who relied on planetary movements to his utter discomfiture and chagrin. The Buddha preached the moral that man is his own star. The stanza is found in the *Nakkhatha játaka*, the birth tale of omens :—

Nakkhatam patimanentham attho
balam upaccagá
Attho atthassa nakkhattam, kim karis-
santi táraká.

When the star-gazing fool is waiting
for luck, the luck goes by ;
The star of luck is luck, and not any
star in the sky.

The second is the *asta-lòka dhamma*, the eight conditions to which man is subject to. They are:—gain, loss, dishonour, fame, blame, praise, happiness and suffering. Each vicissitude, in order, corresponds with some of the chief attributes of each of the eight planetary guardians in his own zodiacal house. For instance, in the seventh, in which the initials of the marriage partner are carved, the condition is happiness (*sukkham*) and in the eighth over which Yama presides, there is suffering (*dukkham*).

Science produces weapons more deadly than the atom bomb and mankind is under the sentence of death. Earnest minded seekers after truth realise that the third stage symbolised in the ring, namely, the *astánga-síla*, the eight-fold moral practice is a creative moment in the history of the world. In the way of life there is no ritual or dope for the masses. There is an insistence upon mental uprightness, upon right aims and speech, right conduct and honest livelihood. There is a quickening of the conscience and an appeal to generous and self-forgetful ends.

G. S. P. DAHANAYAKE

5 JUL 1974

The Visvakarmans of Ceylon

" Visvakarma was the Prajapati, or Lord, of all industrial Arts, maker of all ornaments, Prince of all artisans ".

Mahabharata I, 2592.

All through the four and a half centuries of foreign rule in the maritime provinces, and also long before that, there was a community in the Island which had monopolised the mechanical arts and crafts of Ceylon.

Their services were utilised by the foreigners, the Dutch in particular, for making the articles of gold and silver and iron which they required, but in the Kandyan Kingdom, which had retained its independence till a few years after the British occupation, their art flourished, and up to the present has delighted connoisseurs with articles of exquisite workmanship executed with the rare taste and delicacy which have always characterised their efforts.

Kandyan art is now known all the world over, but it was not only confined to objects of vertu. The *Kottalbadda,* or ancient artificers' department, manufactured the arms and weapons which enabled the Kandyan monarchs to defend their kingdom in the wars with the Portuguese and the Dutch. Light artillery known as " *kodituwakku* " or " grasshopper guns ", referred to as such by the Dutch owing to their two legs supporting them in front, were cast by them and had a longer range than the Dutch cannon. We also read of a fowling-piece richly inlaid with gold belonging to Raja Sinha II of glorious memory, which was presented to the Dutch after the death of that great monarch. The weapon is now very probably in a Dutch museum or collection, as well as an elaborate model of a cannon. The royal mint, too, was administered by this department, and to its artificers we might also trace the Kandyan throne with its richly chased plating of gold, which was returned to Ceylon a few years ago by the English authorities.

It is not possible in this short sketch to trace all the activities of these technicians. They were also the sculptors, stone-masons and architects of ancient Ceylon, and the remains of the glory that was Sri Lanka, the engineering works, the sculpture and architecture of the buried cities and the religious monuments,—are a silent tribute to the work of their clever hands.

No village of any importance was complete without its Achari or " teacher ", a term commonly employed to indicate a tenant whose holding under the service tenures system was set apart for the service of a smith. In practice, the holding became a hereditary possession which had remained in the family of the original grantee from times immemorial. It is due to this circumstance, perhaps, that we can trace the natural adaptability of the members of the community to the mechanical arts, and their proficiency was never called in question, from the " ganachari ", or village blacksmith, to the " mul-achari ", or head of a department.

The Visva Brahmins from whom the community claims its origin included the Achari, or Blacksmiths, Fitters and all those who worked in iron ; Wadu, or Carpenters, Architects and all workers in wood ; Loguru, or Braziers and Coppersmiths ; Galwadu, or Stonemasons and Sculptors ; and Badall, or Gold and Silversmiths, Engravers and Jewellers.

How or when this branch of the great Aryan family first came to Ceylon is now lost in the night of ages. Their history is curiously blended with the mythology of Vedic times. " Manu ", according to the Vedas, " was a Blacksmith and the author of the Rig Veda ; Maya was a Carpenter and author of the Yajur Veda ; Twashtar was a Brazier and author of Sama Veda; Silpi was a Mason and author of Atharvana Veda ; and Visvagna was a Goldsmith and author of Pranava Veda. Know that these five Vedies were Brahmins ". Visvakarma, too, affords an interesting parallel with the Greek Hephaistos, master of the arts which need the aid of fire, and the Roman Vulcan. According to an ancient writing nearly as old as the Rig Veda, before the world was created,

> " There was no earth, no water, no fire, no aether, no knowledge, no smell, no sense, no Brahma, no Vishnu, no stars ; there was only vacancy of space. Only the self-existent Visvakarmaya had being ".

It was only to be expected that the clever artisans and engineers of the community should have received marks of royal favour such as grants of lands and villages, titles of honour and posts of trust. The record is a long one, from early Sinhalese times to the last King of the Kandyan kingdom and also during the years of foreign rule.

On appointment to office, it was the custom at the Court of Kandy to secure a fillet of gold or silver or copper round the

head of the recipient, according to dignity or importance of the rank conferred on him. At the same time he received a title of honour symbolical of worth or courage. The gold fillet granted to a member of the community bears the following inscription (translated): "In the year 1674 of the Saka Era (1752 A.D.) granted to Sri Danta Dhatu Makaraddwaja Mandalawalli VISVAKARMA Rajakaruna Muhandiram".

It is not proposed to refer to the large number of Sannasas granted to the community by Sinhalese royalty, but reference may be made to one of the most distinguished Sinhalese of more recent times. He was Don Anthonio Rabel, who for his meritorious services under the Dutch was, in 1661, awarded a gold medal by the Governor, Rijkloff van Goens, with the following inscription:—

"Door den Admirael Rijkloff van Goens voor goede diensten vereert aan MEESTER ANTHONIO RABEL, Opper Vidane van de Betmes en Corale van de Dolas Das Corla 1661".

Which may be translated: Awarded in 1661 by the Admiral Rykloff van Goens to the Master, Anthonio Rabel, Chief Vidana of the Betmas and Korala of the Dolosdas Korale for his good services.

On the reverse is CEYLON, the monogram (VOC) of the United East-India Company, and JACHT MEESTER, or Master of the (Elephant) Hunt.

E. REIMERS

Colombo

The Cult of Beauty

"If a painter choose to set a human head on the neck and shoulders of a horse, to gather limbs from every animal and clothe them with feathers from every kind of bird, and make what at the top was a beautiful woman have ugly ending in a black fish's tail—when you were admitted to view his picture, should you refrain from laughing? . . . It was a wine-jar that was to be moulded; as the wheel runs round why does it come out a pitcher? In a word, let your work be what you will, provided only it be uniform and a whole. (Horace in a letter to a friend)".

CULT has an ugly connotation these days and it is with some hesitation that I use it in the context of Beauty. It brings to mind long-haired "bohemians", diet-faddists, teetotallers, followers of various forms of esotericisms and fanatics of every sort and variety. Such cults usually form themselves into organisations and there is in every instance some sort of ritual be it even the ritual of not visiting your barber and not using soap and water. But the Cult of Beauty does not proclaim its votaries by advertisements of that nature; nor do they themselves behave outrageously exhibiting to the gaze of every passer-by the outward signs of what they believe in and live by. One does not speak of the Cult of Breathing. In the same way one means by the Cult of Beauty that ancient weakness of Man for whatsoever things are good, noble and beautiful. But the instinctive recognition of Beauty on the part of Man and his need of it has become so well-defined a part of Civilisation that no word can express the awareness of Beauty as well as "Cult".

Notwithstanding the great (and little-rewarded) labours of archaeologists and antiquarians our knowledge of the older civilisations is meagre. But from what little has come to light we know that Religion and Worship, Man's oldest institutions, identified Beauty with the geometry of Life and the pattern of Nature. To follow a certain rule was to carry out some action or achieve some result in its completeness. In Nature nothing is left incomplete. A cloud detaching itself from the mass and fleeting across the sky does not conform to exact measurements but it is complete, very complete in itself. A river ending its journey in the sand of a desert is a complete action, a perfect work of the Creator. A tree whose top has been blasted away by lightning somehow conforms to the pattern of its surroundings. Nature is never caught half-way. We always see it in a finished state. This was what led sensitive men to do things beautifully and to make things with that touch of finish and completeness with which Nature contrived to dazzle and inspire humanity.

Thus song and dance, measure and movement, building and digging, planting and sowing—all the manifold acts of living—took on a conscious rhythm. This consciousness made Man an artist, and he revelled in a power which he shared, though in a very small measure, with the Creator. No Religion has denied Beauty. Some Religions have discouraged the exercise of certain forms of Art while emphasising certain other forms. But no Religion has wholly banished Art. The very teachings of the various religious leaders have been set down in exact forms which are metrical and rhythmic. Islam, which for reasons known to its founder, discouraged painting and music as a part of its ritual has given to Civilisation a very elegant form of architecture, and Islamic culture gave rise to hordes of artists and singers and painters. The teachings of the Buddha, again, enjoined upon his more serious devotees the contemplation of more permanent virtues than are visible in Beauty; but paradoxically enough, the fervour that the Buddha caused in the hearts of his followers transformed deserts and snowy heights and thick forests into vast tracts of Beauty.

Like the lessons of Nature the examples of Beauty enthroned in cathedral, mosque, and monastery do not arouse equal emotions in mankind. Therefore that sensitive minority, whom we call craftsmen, artists, and poets, make it their life-work to arouse wonderment and idealism in the hearts of their fellow-men by offering them Beauty in tangible quantities. Sometimes the artists and poets have been fortunate in their fellow-men; for, some races are more prone to the Beautiful than others. And some races cannot thrive and function unless Beauty is a part of their everyday life. Such were the Greeks. Perhaps no race as a whole paid such meticulous attention to the cultivation of the Beautiful as the Greeks did. Whether it was poetry or dance, drama or public speaking, architecture or sculpture the Greeks aimed at perfection. While Athens and Sparta were keyed to what we would call today an urban standard, their civilisation was an agricultural one. And the Hellenistic standards in every branch of Art have yet to be excelled; and they suit alike agricultural as well as industrial civilisations.

An industrial, or mechanical, civilisation necessarily brings in its train much ugliness and as a consequence a greater proportion of mankind living under such a civilisation becomes insensitive to Beauty and inured to Ugliness. However, there is one redeeming feature. Under the "inventive" Civilisation

MENIKE — *J. D. A. Perera*

in which we live today there are greater opportunities for comparing our possessions with those of other countries and for contrasting our lack with the acquisitions of others. Also we have the means of disseminating and sharing knowledge and information to a greater degree. Therefore, while the number of those who do not complain against Ugliness is greater today, by the same token, the number of those who love Beauty and wage war against Ugliness is much greater than it has ever been in the past. For example, Chicago, which is notorious for its crime and whose *abattoirs* and meat-packing plants are perhaps the biggest in America, is at the same time one of the liveliest centres of culture in America, with a famous university, an opera house, a Symphony Orchestra, art galleries, theatres and public libraries.

But we in Asia still live, happily in my opinion, under an agricultural civilisation where we turn to Nature for Beauty and where Beauty is yet a community possession rather than private. As the cathedral or church in medieval Europe expressed the collective artistic talent and taste of the community so the monastery or temple has remained with us as the focus of our collective cultural efforts. And in non-competitive times and under a cultured patronage those efforts, even when they were primitive, were based on good taste. But in these days of so-called democracy, poised as we are at a transitory stage, and when half-educated demagogues and politicians loom large in the public life of our respective countries we cannot expect a cultured patronage. So the survival of culture and the love of Beauty must become the special responsibility of those of us who feel that we live in vain if we do not discover Beauty and share our discoveries with as many of our fellow-men as possible.

We must form an aristocracy of Culture, an aristocracy to which admission is unlimited, the only qualification being a sensibility to good taste. It will be our duty to condemn bad taste and to uphold all worthy effort. We must reaffirm universal rules regarding Beauty and Good Taste and at the same time we must encourage experiment and invention. Creative work consists in expressing in a new language the old truths—nothing more. But at every stage of " Newness " there must be a standard even if it be a temporary standard, and there must be rules—the rules of Good Taste.

Naturally we in Asia cannot borrow wholesale from the American Middle-West, no matter how praise-worthy their standards. We can admire them for what they are doing in America or New Zealand or Cuba in their fight against Philistinism but it would be folly to copy them in everything they do. For us in Asia our best mentors still are our neighbours. In the case of Ceylon, India is the most fruitful ally in matters cultural and artistic, that is so long as we do not copy her in her newer hybrid activities such as the cinema. When we say that Art is universal in its appeal it does not mean that Art does not have its geography. Nothing is so conspicuous a product of a geographical locale as Art. That is why we say Beauty is relative. Those African women who enlarge their lips by inserting wooden discs of graduated size or those women of Upper Burma who elongate their necks by inserting several layers of neck-bands conform to a local standard of beauty.

The Singhala woman was beautiful so long as she remained true to her local standards. Her jewellery and her dress followed a pattern which had been hallowed by custom and found suitable by usage. But the moment our women adopted a hybrid dress copied from the Portuguese and the Dutch they began to look like some derelicts of a Caribbean sea-port. There are still some worthy Singhala women who haven't looked into the mirror since they looked into it (or their great-great-great-grandmothers) some three hundred years ago ! But now some sort of reason seems to have entered our brains and our women have taken to wearing the Indian sari even though their menfolk still sport the fashions of Monrovia and Belgravia.

There is no more graceful dress in the world than the sari but it must be worn with an unself-conscious grace, which our fashionable women lack. And the sari is incomplete without flowers in the hair and without appropriate jewellery. I should very much like to see our women spending their money on solid gold jewellery than throw it away in the big shops on canned foodstuffs and Axminster carpets. While Hindu homes are still (after their being looted by one conqueror after another) full of silver plate and silver drinking and eating utensils of every shape and kind Ceylon homes

are full of the rust-gathering tin and iron rubbish imported from Europe together with some junk from the local junk shops. And where our grandmothers wore heavy gold jewellery we are content with some plastic ear-clasps and brooches and some flimsy gewgaws which are just apologies for jewellery. I would like to see our Singhala women—as many of them as possible—once again wear heavy gold chains round their necks and gold ornaments in their hair and gold bangles on their wrists and golden armlets and silver anklets and even gold studs set with diamonds as nose ornaments. I do not suggest that they should be loaded with jewellery like beasts of burden but what they wear should be of the best and they should wear more jewellery. If the women insist on their husbands spending money on jewellery and on beautiful things of lasting worth for the home then the money we send abroad for American cars and Australian frozen meat will remain in Ceylon. And our women will enhance their beauty.

I have stressed this aspect of Beauty because from the Greeks downwards Woman has been the ideal of Beauty to whom the Poet addressed his song and whose lines the painter and the sculptor tried to enshrine in painting and sculpture. Even the male figures of Greek sculpture had something of the feminine in them; and the most adored divinity of the Hindu pantheon, Krishna, is a soft-cheeked boy with almost feminine graces. This simply emphasises the fact that Woman is the inspirer of Art and the artist can create only in proportion to the measure of inspiration he receives. In the cultural desert of Ceylon where our "intelligentsia" turn for sole intellectual nourishment to a couple of daily newspapers women as much as men are responsible for our present poverty—poverty in gold, poverty in culture, and in artistic endeavour. Led by the "elite" an increasing number of people are running after the false gods of the West, while paradoxically enough the more discriminating among the Westerners are turning towards the East for spiritual guidance and basic values.

It is this craze for everything Western that is responsible for the appalling bad taste, from architecture to furniture and jewellery, that the people of Ceylon exhibit today. But the mass of our people have not yet become urban and I like to think that Singhala Dvipa is sound at the core. In the regeneration that I look forward to Woman as the inspirer of Beauty must play a more active part. In Aristophanes' play, the *Lysistrata*, the Athenian women drove sense into the heads of their husbands (and prevented a war—in the play at least) by depriving their husbands of the pleasures of the bed-chamber. If it becomes necessary, I wish our women would resort to a like expedient so that the men of Ceylon would learn to discriminate between Bad Taste and Good Taste and exemplify it in their daily lives.

Then perhaps the homes of our richer folk would cease to look like furniture shops, and would contain (where now there is a hideous sideboard containing a tin tray advertising a whisky together with some assorted pieces of "Jacobean" glassware) a bookcase with a few good books, and above the bookcase a framed painting or drawing. And there should be good, solid brassware, even as ornaments, if not for utility. And our men might then dress more sensibly, and our women more gracefully. And heightening the beauty of the women there should be lovely gold jewels, and, contrasting with the enduring solidity of the jewellery there should be flowers in their hair. Given these conditions we shall hear original songs from our bards, and our sculptors would sculpt and our craftsmen would design in wood, bronze, silver and gold with a new zest, and beautiful Ceylon would truly become a setting for a Beauty-loving people.

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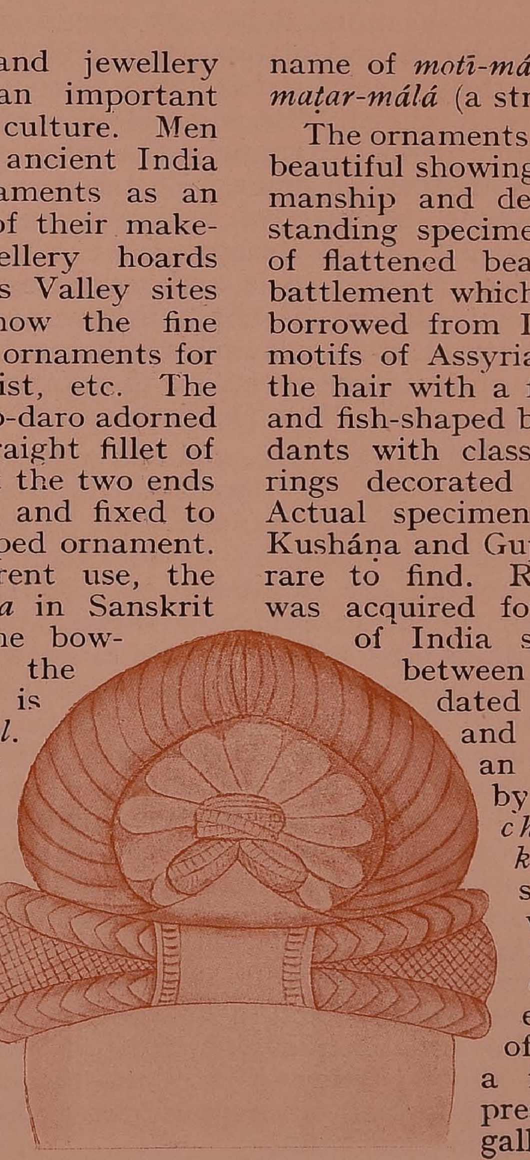
Pondicherry.

Ancient Ornaments in Mathura Art

ORNAMENTS and jewellery have played an important part in beauty culture. Men and women in ancient India considered ornaments as an essential part of their make-up. The jewellery hoards from the Indus Valley sites and Taxila show the fine workmanship of the various ornaments for the head, neck, arms, waist, etc. The fashionable ladies of Mohenjo-daro adorned their hair with a kind of straight fillet of gold with perforated holes at the two ends or with a bow-shaped fillet, and fixed to their braid a peculiar S-shaped ornament. All these are still in current use, the straight fillet is called *patra* in Sanskrit and *pāt* in Hindi, and the bow-shaped one as *māng-paṭṭī*; the one for the braid of hair is called *choṭīchakka* or *veṇī-phūl*. Round the neck they put on rich necklaces of beads made of semi-precious stones, or sometimes of gold of the shape of round pearls. A several-stringed torque consisting of gold beads of the size of small pea-seeds was a lovely specimen of the Indus Valley jewellery, which would be called in traditional vocabulary by the name of *motī-málá* or more appropriately *maṭar-málá* (a string of pea-seeds).



The ornaments from Taxila are still more beautiful showing developed skill in craftsmanship and design. Some of the outstanding specimens include a long girdle of flattened beads shaped like a step-battlement which design must have been borrowed from Iran and the still earlier motifs of Assyria; a dangling chain for the hair with a floral *padaka* at one end and fish-shaped beads; elaborate ear pendants with classical motifs; and finger rings decorated with vine motif-design. Actual specimens of ornaments of the Kusháṇa and Gupta periods are extremely rare to find. Recently an ear pendant was acquired for the National Museum of India showing an emerald set between two pearls; it may be dated in the late Gupta period and seems to correspond to an ear ornament mentioned by Báṇa in the *Harsha-charita* as *tri-kanṭaka karṇá-bharaṇa* which consisted of two large pearls with an emerald set in between them. The ornaments of the medieval period are likewise of rare occurrence, only a few specimens being preserved in the museum galleries.

PLATE I

But the representation of ornaments in sculpture and painting throws a flood of light on this subject and amply compensates for the paucity of actual specimens. The male and female statuary of the Mathura school of sculpture made in the Kusháṇa and the Gupta periods (1st cent.-6th cent. A.D.) supplies profuse documentation of the forms of jewellery that was in vogue in the Golden Age of that school.

For example, the female head No. 1 shows lovely *coiffure* adorned with a *singār-paṭṭī* made of four strings of fish-shaped beads and two strings of spirals. At one end of the fish chaplet is a round lotus plaque, and a similar second plaque attached to the first by a pearl string hangs loosely on the forehead. The whole device must have looked extremely charming and of aristocratic grace. Fortunately an actual specimen of a similar golden chaplet of fish design with the floral disc attached to it and consisting of eight plaques of triple fish was discovered at Taxila, of which one-half portion is preserved at the National Museum in New Delhi.

Female head No. 2 shows a garland fringing on the forehead the rising locks of hair. In head No. 3, front view, the drooping forelocks on the forehead are beautified by a wreath on the head, held at the back by a ribbon and a braid of floral pattern. The figure is made of blue schist stone and illustrates a style of *coiffure* introduced by the Greek ladies in Gandhāra. The frontal hair pad in female head No. 5 shows a typical style of Mathurā *coiffure* popular during the Kusháṇa period (1st-3rd century A.D.) only, and conspicuous by its absence in the Gupta period. The motif is similar to the pillow-like transverse crossbars (*sūchī*) fixed in Kusháṇa railings. The style of hair seen in No. 6 shows a slight parting of the hair (*sīmanta*) as if formed by a pair of fly-whisks (*chāmara-yugala*).

PLATE II

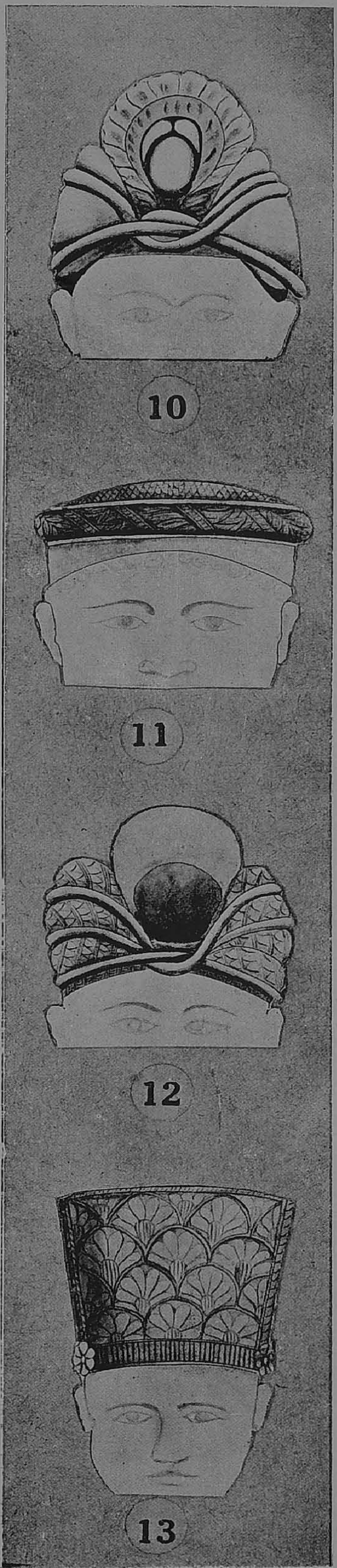


PLATE III

The female head No. 7 was found at the site of Katrá Keshavadeva in Mathurā and is in the typical Gupta style showing round ear-rings (*tāṭaṅka-chakra*) and rolls of frizzled hair arranged in three parallel rows, illustrating the style mentioned by Kalidasa as *valībhrit alaka* in his description of Indumatī's hair (*Raghuvaṁśa*, VIII, 53).

The two following female heads Nos. 8 and 9 show the typical Gupta ear-ring and a pad of hair on the head covered with floral patterns. No. 8 shows plain hair first turned backwards and then towards the crown in a loop, the device imitating a serpentine style. The *coiffure* on the next head is of greater interest, the spare spirals of hair (*āvarta keśa*) seem to float on rippling water like the leaves of a lotus plant and the central bun *kusuma-chandraka* imitates the lotus flower with full blown petals (*phulla-padma*). This attractive and rather ingenious style of hair-dressing no doubt reproduced the lotus pond (*padma-vana* or *padma-sara*).

Figures in Plates III and IV illustrate male styles in head-dresses prevailing at Mathurā. The foliated *mukuṭa* shown on page 45 was the typical style of the turban in the Kushāṇa period. The frontal projection of the turban on head No. 10 imitated the monk's bottle or nectar flask (*amrita-ghaṭa*) held in the left hand of Bodhisattva Maitreya in Kushāṇa sculpture. No. 11 shows a rather simple style consisting of a wreath encircling a cap. The turban worn on head No. 12 is marked by interesting loops similar to those on No. 10, but the double globular projections show a distinctive style reminiscent of earlier traditions. The high projecting crown on No. 13 covered with floral pattern is similar to that worn by Indra in Mathura art. The pointed cap worn on head No. 14 is richly embroidered and undoubtedly shows a Saka chieftain wearing the

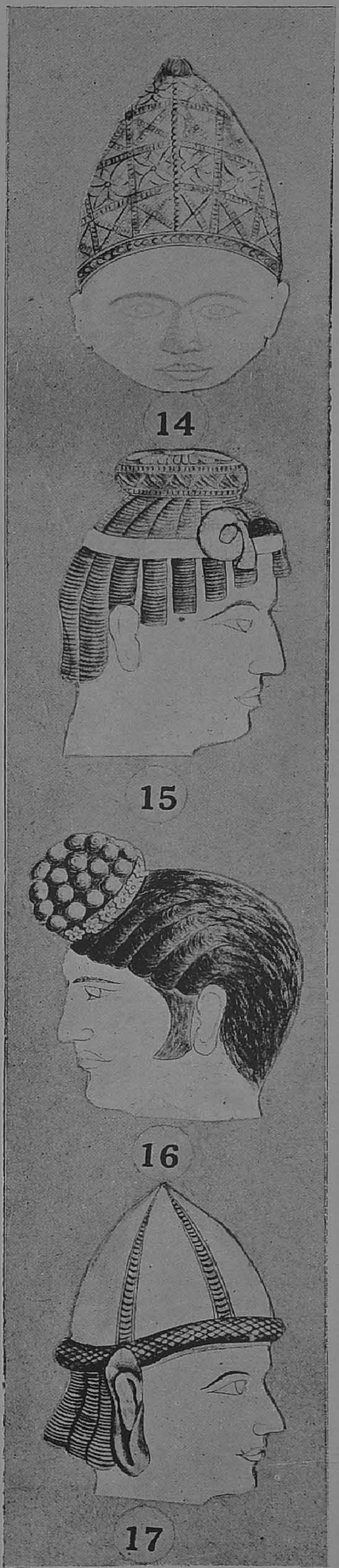
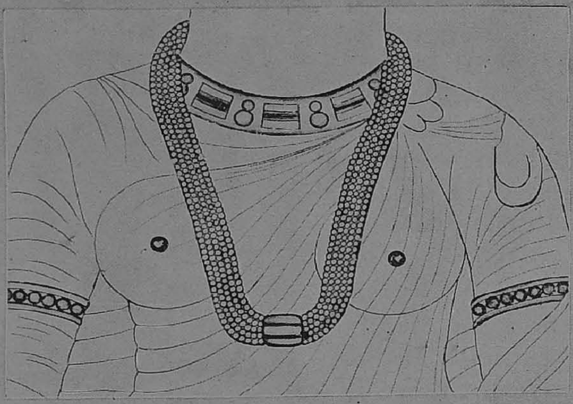


PLATE IV



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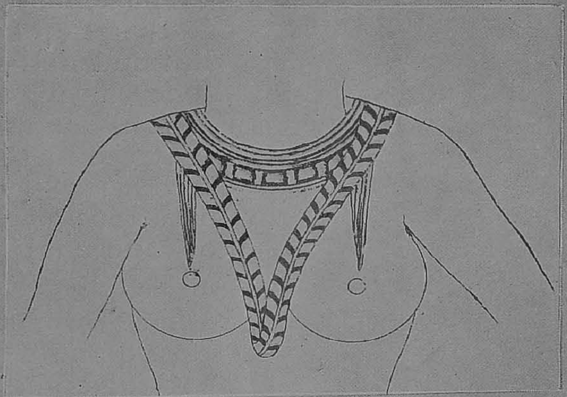

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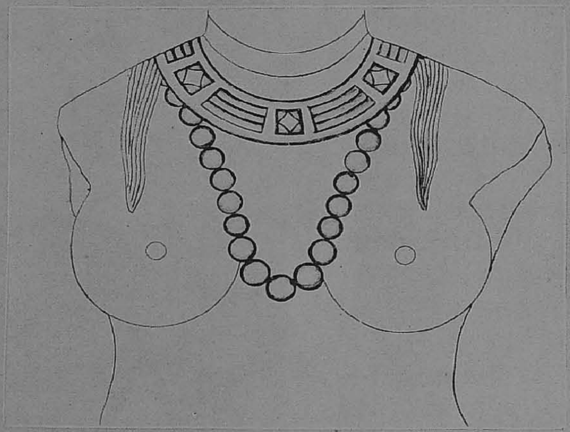

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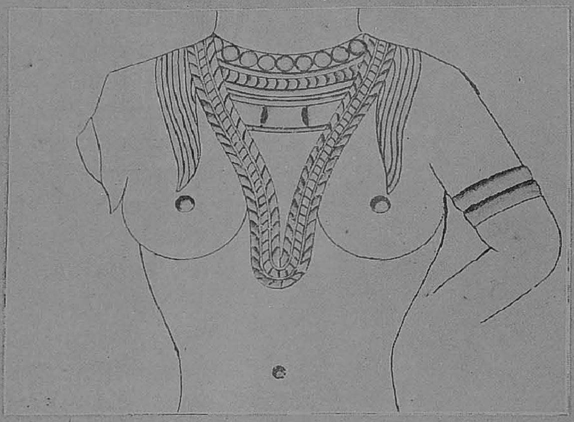

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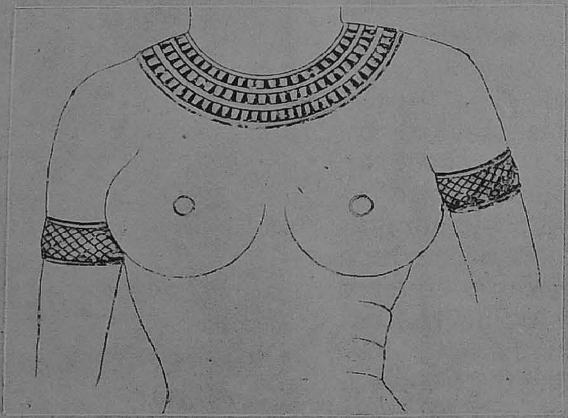

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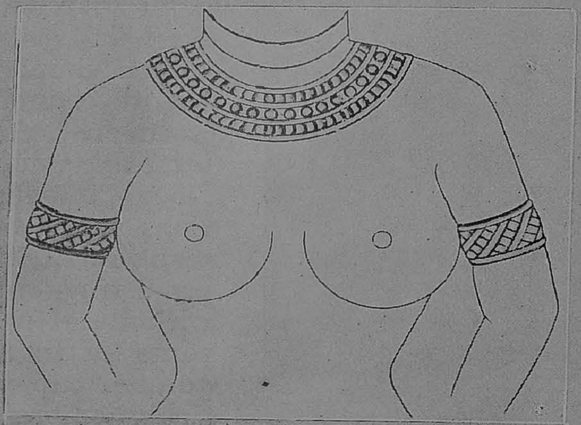

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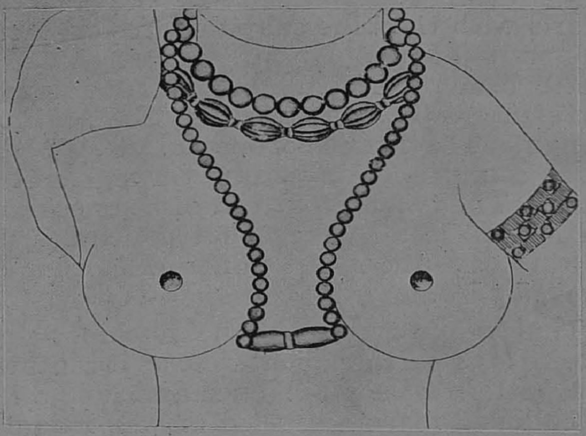
PLATE V



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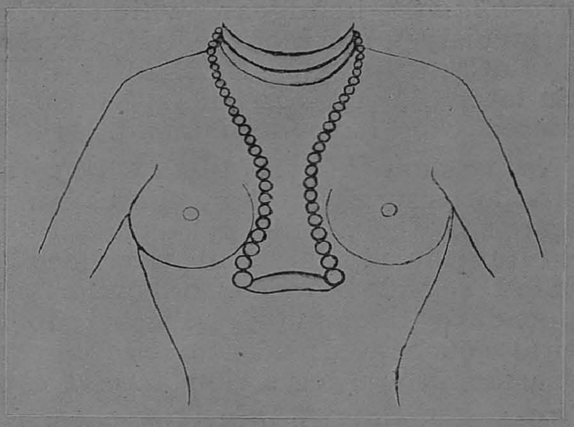

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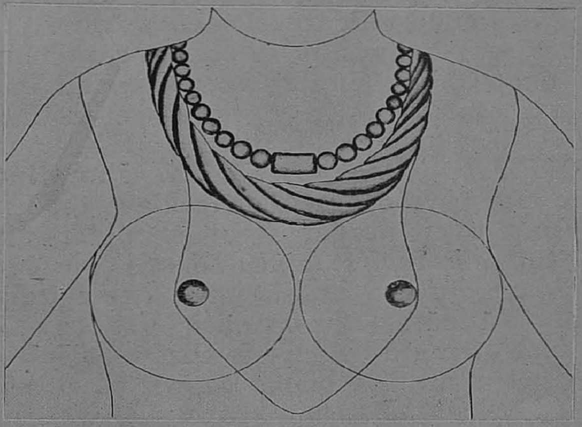

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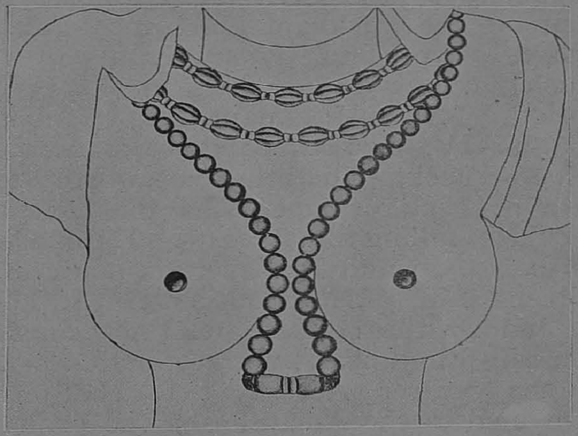

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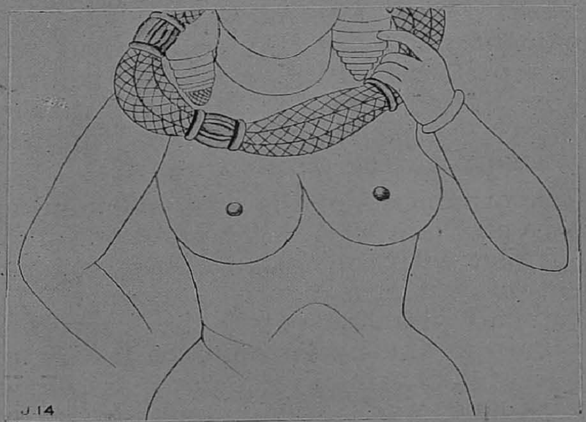

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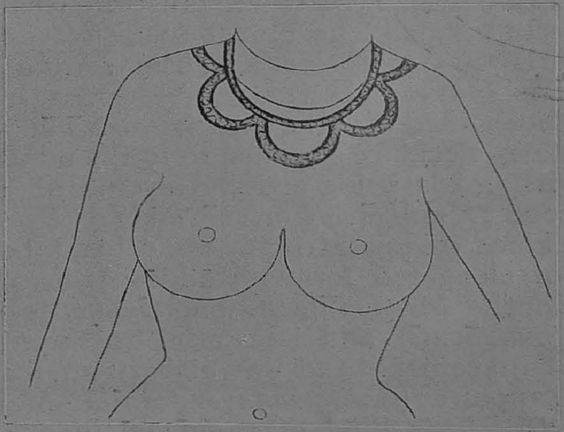

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PLATE VI

tigra-khauda headgear which was a distinguishing mark of the Indo-Scythians at Mathurā in the time of Kanishka and later. More than one specimen with pointed caps have been found.

No. 15 shows a style of hair with vertical spiral locks surmounted by a lotus bun and secured in the middle by a plain ribbon, features already seen in the heads on Plate II. Male head No. 16 shows a frontal appendage resembling a basket full of spiral conches. Head No. 17 represents a Sassanian wearing a ribbed *kulah* cap.

Plates V and VI illustrate the various styles of female necklaces. Flat torques were a common feature of Kushāṇa female figures as seen on Nos. 18 to 23. It was an early feature of Śuṅga ornaments and might have been even Mauryan, as it is seen on the Parkham and other Yaksha images. We find it surviving in the Kushāṇa, but disappearing in the Gupta period. Its Sanskrit name was *graiveyaka* (Pāṇini IV, 2.96) from its proximity to *grīvā* or neck. The other noteworthy feature of neck ornaments is the pendant necklace falling on breasts. In one set as in No. 19 and No. 21 it is made of a golden chain, and in the other as in Nos. 24, 25 and 27 the pendant necklace consists of small round pearls with elongated beads in the centre. According to the terms explained in the Amarakosha the pendant necklace with the golden chain design might be identified as *pralambikā* or *pralamba* and that of pearls as *uraḥ-sūtrikā*, the string that falls on the breasts. Busts Nos. 24 and 26 (Plate VI) illustrate smaller pearl strings. The first is made of round pearls of equal size and the second of pearls of graded sizes; the former may be identified as the *nakshatra-mālā*, i.e. a starry necklace so called from the number of its pearls being twenty-seven, and the second as *muktāvali* or *ekāvalī*, i.e. a pearl necklace of one string. Its central bead is of elongated form. Kālidāsa refers to it in the *Meghadūta* as *muktāguṇa* (same as *muktāvalī*) and is careful to mention that its central bead was bigger and made of sapphire (*sthūlamadhyendranīla, Megh.* I. 46). This kind of *muktāvalī* necklace is a typical Gupta feature and the white pearls with the blue sapphire are conspicuous in numerous Ajanta paintings. The fluted beads of Nos. 24 and 27 are particularly interesting as imitating the *harītakī* design. The necklace on No. 28 appears to be a multi-chain passing through fluted reels. The twisted pattern of the necklace on No. 26 is a feature that continues up to this day under the name of *balevṛa* or *umethā hāra*.

The torque worn by the female figure No. 29 is of particular interest as it imitates the pattern of a plain Kushana halo with a scalloped margin as seen on the Buddha and Bodhisattva images of that period. The scallops look like a border of festoons disposed round a plain circle.

Amongst male necklaces shown on Pl. VII, we may identify the clasp consisting of two joined alligator heads as in A. 46 which was known by the significant name of *makarikā*. The alligator-headed ends of the garland design necklace in E. 7 are still a current feature and bear the name *graha-mukha* or *gāhamukhī* in Hindi. The conspicuous second necklace on E. 7 passing over proper right shoulder may be the *aṁsārpita lamba-hāra*, i.e. a long necklace thrown on the shoulder referred to by Kālidāsa (*Raghuvaṁśa*, VI. 60). The amulet string on A. 45 is the *rakshāviṭikā sūtra*, the amulet being known as *rakshāviṭikā* or *rakshā-karaṇḍaka* in the works of Kālidāsa and Bāṇa. The *padaka* or plaque on A. 45 is like a crescent (*chandralekhā*) and on A. 46 like a disc or conventionalised flower. The design in the necklace on No. 1515 resembles that of a pendant flask (*amritaghata*). The neck ornament on figure D.1 is adorned with the motif called *nāga-mudrā* referred to by Kālidāsa in the *Malavikāgnimitra*, i.e. two coiled snakes flanking an axis, and also with the *triratna* motif.

The ornaments of the arm and hand are shown on Plate VIII. The first one shows an armlet with the design of a facing peacock on which a figure is riding. The outspread plumage of the bird serves as the halo in the background of the figure. This design of armlet was known as *māyūra keyūra* and was a distinguishing feature of the Kushāṇa period, a reference to it being found in Ashvaghosha (1st cent.

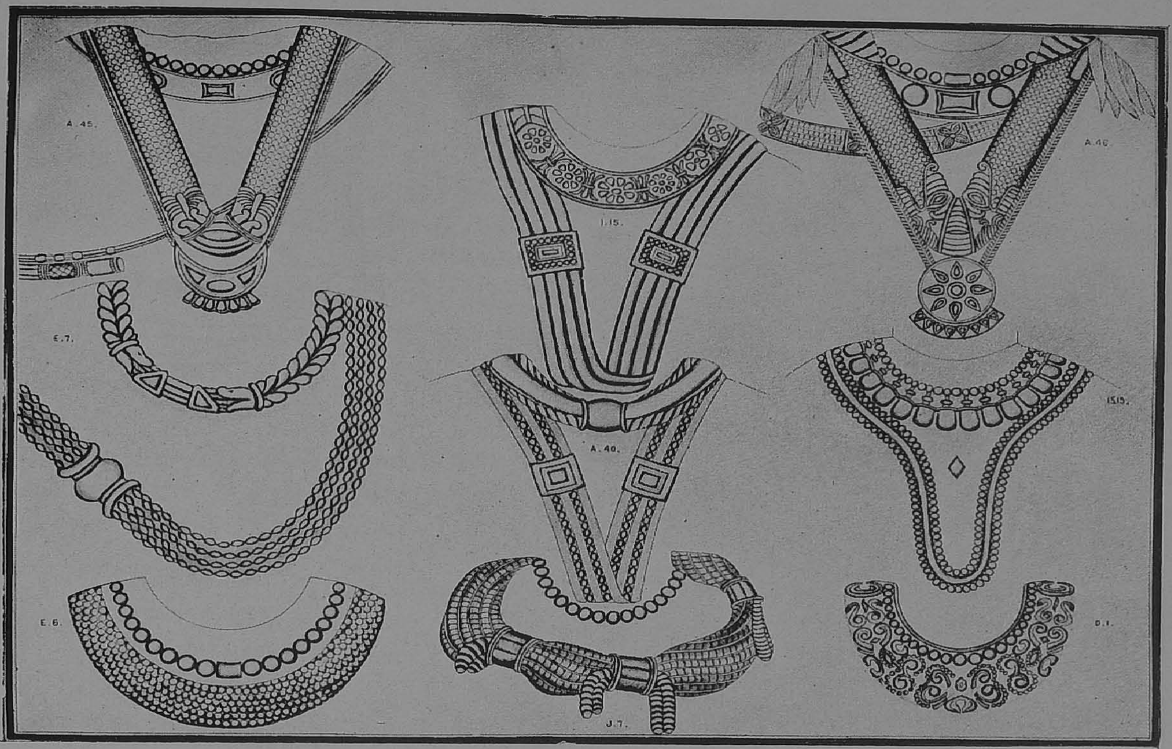


PLATE VII

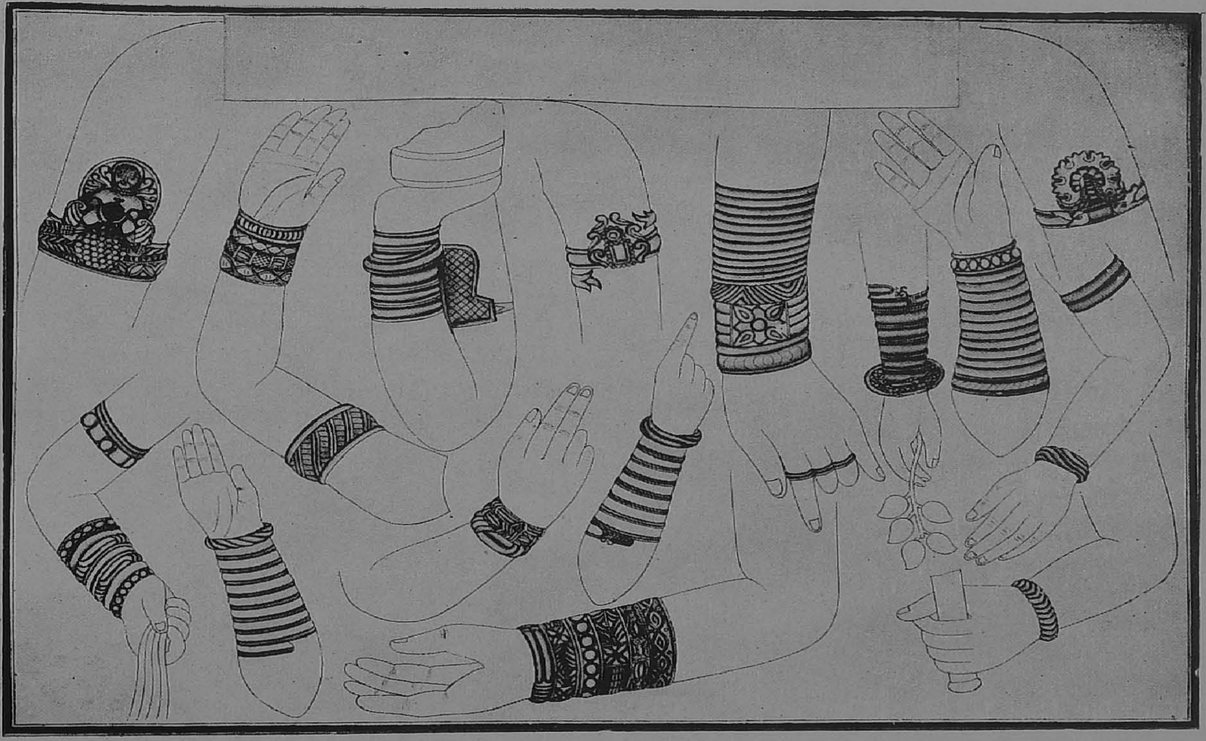
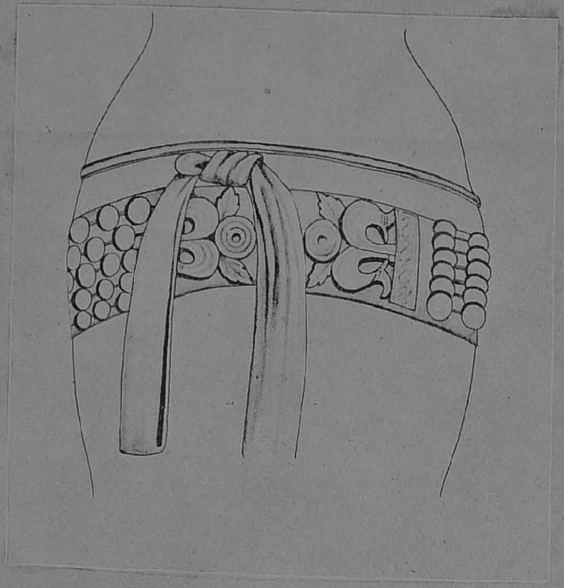
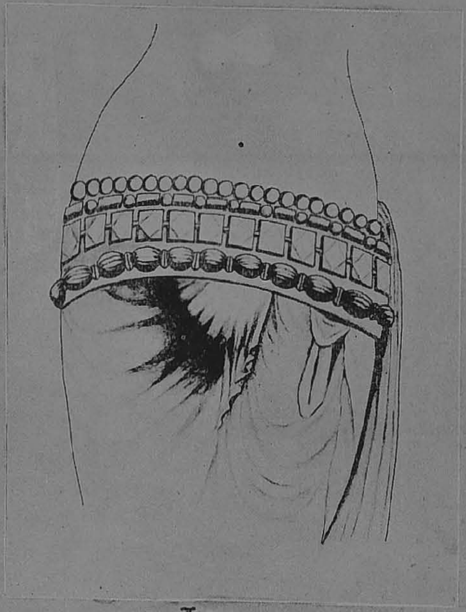


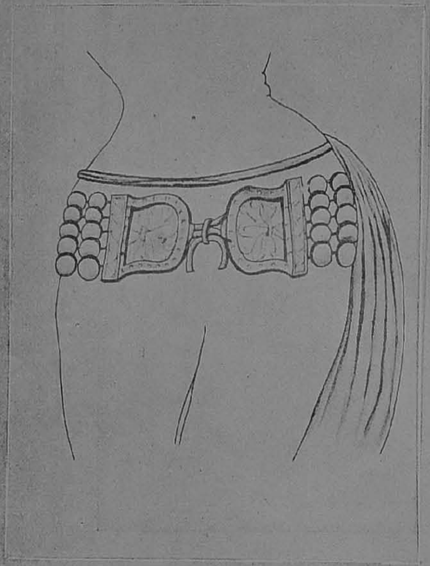
PLATE VIII



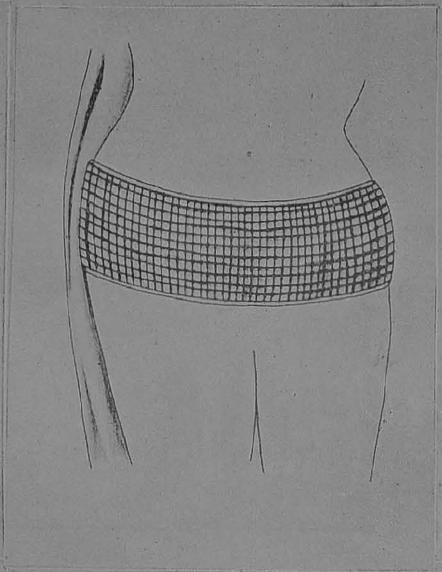
F. 14



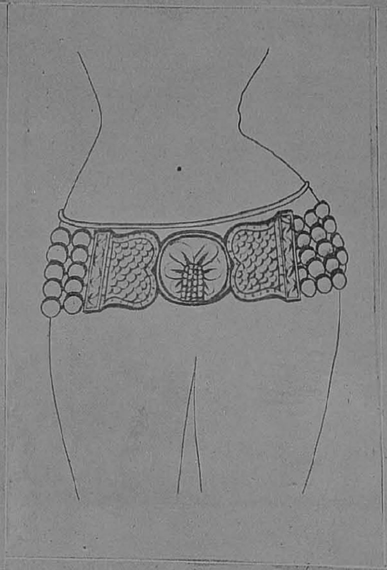
J. 2



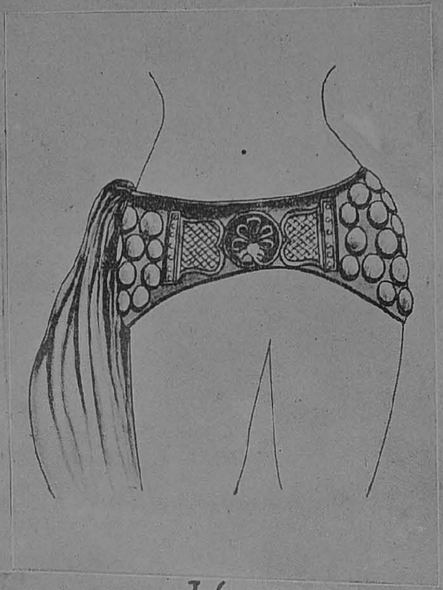
L. 95



J. 11



J. 5



J. 6

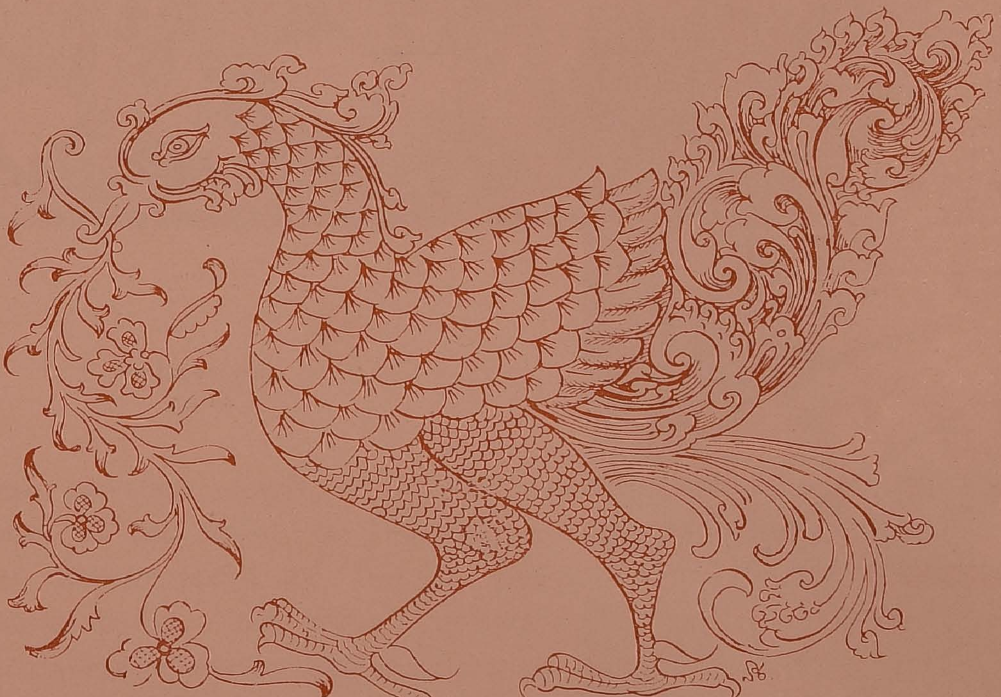
PLATE IX

A.D.). In the Gupta armlets, floral background with pearl festoon replaced the preceding motif as seen in the last figure in the first row on Pl. VIII. The armlet in the centre of this Plate was known as *ananta valaya* and was again a Gupta feature. The loose bangle round the hand holding the mango branch was a favourite fashion designated as *dolā-valaya*. The flat bangles in the same figure were made of lac and called *paṭṭa-valaya*.

Plates IX and X illustrate the various styles of girdles and zonal decoration. A noteworthy feature of these elaborate girdles is their clasping arrangement. The clasp was known as *pakshaka*, from which is derived its current Hindi name *pakkhā*. The design of the clasp on F. 14 is that of *triratna*, and of that on L. 95 of honeysuckle. The beads in both cases are of flattened form. The waist band on J. 11 is that of check cloth serving probably as a broad *kaṭi-bandha*. The girdle on J. 2 consists of four strings comprised of flattened beads, reel and bead design, square plaques and fluted *harītakī* beads. The design on the clasps of J. 5 shows fish-scale, the central clasp showing a flower and pearl festoon, and the design of clasp on J. 6 consists of crossing sets of parallel lines.

V. S. AGRAWALA

National Museum
New Delhi.



RADHIKA

CROUCHING GIRL

The Art of Jamini Roy

SRI CHAITANYA OR KIRTAN

I think there are few countries of the world where the position of art in its relations to the artist, to the community, to science, religion, politics and other departments of life is being more eagerly revaluated than in contemporary India. All these conferences, symposiums, art-annuals and prolonged discussions (often very wearisome, sentimental, muddled and boring) bear witness to the fact that we are involved in a 'complex' which must be analysed clearly before we can go any further in producing art-works.

For we are heirs, in the realm of art, as in other fields, to vast accumulations, ranging from the great ancient and mediaeval tradition, which ended with the disruption of the Moghal Empire, to the age-old folk tradition which broke down under 18th and 19th century European influence. Until the forces of 'civilisation' imposed themselves like a thin veneer on our lives the ritualistic needs of Indian village society had kept the arts close to most people. But with the growth of new groups and patterns the old crafts have been increasingly destroyed until they remain a survival from which the new integration can arise only if certain basic questions are asked. For instance, we have to analyse the creative process itself and see how an individual artist integrates by gathering together certain split off parts of his own nature, and of his audience, in a work of art. Also, we must see how far a particular work is the expression of the personal unconscious of the artist, that is to say of his psychological type and to what extent, given the spark of genius, the similarity of background and development of the artist and his public is responsible for that authentic utterance which strikes a note in various layers of society and is acclaimed a masterpiece. And there are a host of other questions: what is the true basis of an artist's inspiration of his technique and influence? How much does a particular style owe to the structure of the community of which he is a part? And if the existing special and aesthetic relations are inadequate, how can they be changed if at all? . . . All these considerations arise when one addresses oneself to a review of the art of Jamini Roy, certainly one of the few important painters in India today. For, if he himself has not self-consciously asked such questions, he has at least solved some of them in the only way in which a painter can—through paint. So that his work mirrors not only all the current conflicts in India, but marks the turning point of a completely new epoch of development.

(2)

It was at the house of one of his earliest friends, the poet Sudhindra Datta, that I first met Jamini Roy. A somewhat stocky figure in homespun, with a kindly, well-moulded round face, crowned by greying hair, and with mellow Bengali eyes, he seemed so simple, unassuming and unostentatious to me and such a refreshing change from some of the frustrated, attitudinising artists and writers of rich, cosmopolitan, dirty Calcutta.

A CAT

After showing us some canvasses which he hoped to include in the then impending 1938 exhibition of his work in British Indian Street, Jamini Roy went away. Catching the enraptured look in my eyes, Sudhin told me a few facts about the artist's life. Apparently, Jamini, the scion of a small landlord family from a village in Eastern Bengal, had been trained in the current tradition of the Calcutta School of Art, a once vigorous movement based on the revival of the motives of the frescoes of Ajanta and Bagh. But he had become dissatisfied with the spurious elongation of eyebrows and fingernails which was increasingly sentimentalising the productions of this school, and was reaching out to new forms.

THE ELEPHANT

For a time he became a 'fashionable' painter, then he fell under the influence of Vincent Van Gogh and such European painters whom he saw in reproductions. One fine morning, however, he deliberately cut himself adrift from all this and went back to the survivals of the folk tradition in his village. And he evolved that extraordinarily rich, sensuous and musical art which some of his critics have called a 'modern primitivism'.

(3)

What exactly is meant by primitivism? It is obvious that it does not mean 'going native', as some, even of the most celebrated artists between the two world wars thought it to mean when they began to copy negro sculpture and Javanese masks. For 'primitive art', in its African and other fold forms, is neither technically nor emotionally simple. The scientific use of the word 'primitive' denotes a condition of the imagination when the unknown potentialities of nature, or man, or Fate, aroused fears and dreads, appeased by the offering of prayers and the evolution of magical formulas. Since twentieth century man has not, over the bulk of the world, travelled far from this condition, in spite of his much vaunted 'civilisation', it is natural for many artists, in full view of the terrors and hallucinations of the European jungle, to try to soak themselves in the influence of the 'pre-logical' survivals of the earliest art of the world. The difficulties of achieving those changes which make an infant into a self aware man have naturally also tended to make the magic of the child's view of life more important as a new starting point in modern art.

But though at a superficial glance the return of a middle-class Bengali artist from the world of 'fashionable' painting to the folk tradition would seem like

'primitivism' in the above sense, Messrs. John Irwin and Bishnu Dey are right in explaining the peculiar difference between the return of some contemporary European painters to the Altamira caves and Jamini Roy's return to the folk tradition of his country: 'The important point to recognise, they say, is that he approached folk art not as an outsider, but as one who had an intimate knowledge and understanding of the living experiences of the people where lay the roots of the folk culture itself'. Again: 'Jamini Roy never had to pursue Gaugin's far-away search for equivalence and symbolism, nor was it necessary for him to study the paintings of Matisse in order to develop an *integral vision*. For he was going back to the cohesive and comprehensive culture of his inheritance, accepting its myths and legends, basic forms and primary colours as a birthright'.

At the same time, however, it must be admitted as these critics indeed admit, that Jamini Roy had to wage his own peculiar struggle, because he was not content merely to copy the level surfaces, the flattening out of design in depth, etc. or to revive folk painting, but to create a new, forward art from the elements of the somewhat damaged village tradition. The breakdown of the 'feudal' system in India, and the artificial as well as natural obstacles in the way of a modern synthesis makes the transformation extremely difficult. For, on the one hand, the self-conscious artist has to retain the quick of the ancient magician, and on the other hand he has to avail himself of the fruits of scientific knowledge. And because of the clash of the several surviving layers of civilisation in India, the attempt at the communication of one's vision by mastering the fantastic nightmare of hunger, cruelty, oppression, pain and psychological disorders, becomes a heroic struggle against all kinds of doubts and hesitations, especially in pictorial art, which has an indirect, subtler and deeper connection with immediate local realities than science or even the written word.

The pertinacity of instinct, then, with which Jamini Roy went back to the sources of primordial inspiration in the village would not alone have qualified him for respectful attention; for, often, the attitude towards an unknown art can become the sheerest sentimentalism. It was rather his discovery of the truth that much excellence lies in inheritance, as in the conquest of environment, and that the artist *transforms* his material. The ordeal which he went through to reach the point of concentration amid the many strains that were intertwined in his middle-class experience by focussing his attention on everything in contemporary India, simultaneously, makes him uniquely important.

(4)

Let us see what are the characteristic elements of the Bengali folk tradition. The old folk culture is an amalgam of two main streams, the anthropormorphic beliefs of the Dravidians, the original neolithic inhabitants of India, and the more abstract poetising of the Aryans, the earliest invaders. As in most conquests, the conquered culture took its revenge on the conqueror. So that the indigenous nature myths and the dark magical cults, with their pantheon of tree spirits, snake gods, fauns, nereids and ghosts, thoroughly infused the invading strain. But it was not until after the decay of the classical court culture and the emergence of the humanistic revolt of the Buddha that the slow, intricate folk practices became the predominating culture. The decay of central authority and the disruption of Vedic religion through the contentions of the schools was aided by the dynamic undercurrents from the village republics, and thus arose the three great mediaeval forms of Hinduism—the worship of Vishnu, God as the Blessed One in Northern India, the worship of Siva, God as creator, preserver and destroyer in South India, the worship of Sakti, God as Mother in Eastern India. The last of these schools of religion was the main source of those weird Yogic practices which Sir John Woodroffe has described in several volumes of translations of *Tantric Texts*, embodying the apocalyptic philosophy of the Iron Age and enclosing a psychology of ritualistic worship which was to be the main source on the continuous folk art of Bengal. Ecstatic dancing, the rhythms

of music and song, river worship, snake worship, the various cults of the Mother Goddess—all evidence to the insidious triumph of folk imagination over the orthodox mind. Bankura District, where Jamini Roy was born, shows the process of revolt and assimilation more intensely than many others in Bengal. His village of Beliatore still retained, even in our own age of railways and motors, its self-sufficient mediaeval economy. Group life was closely knit together by communal ritual and immune from contact with the outside world.

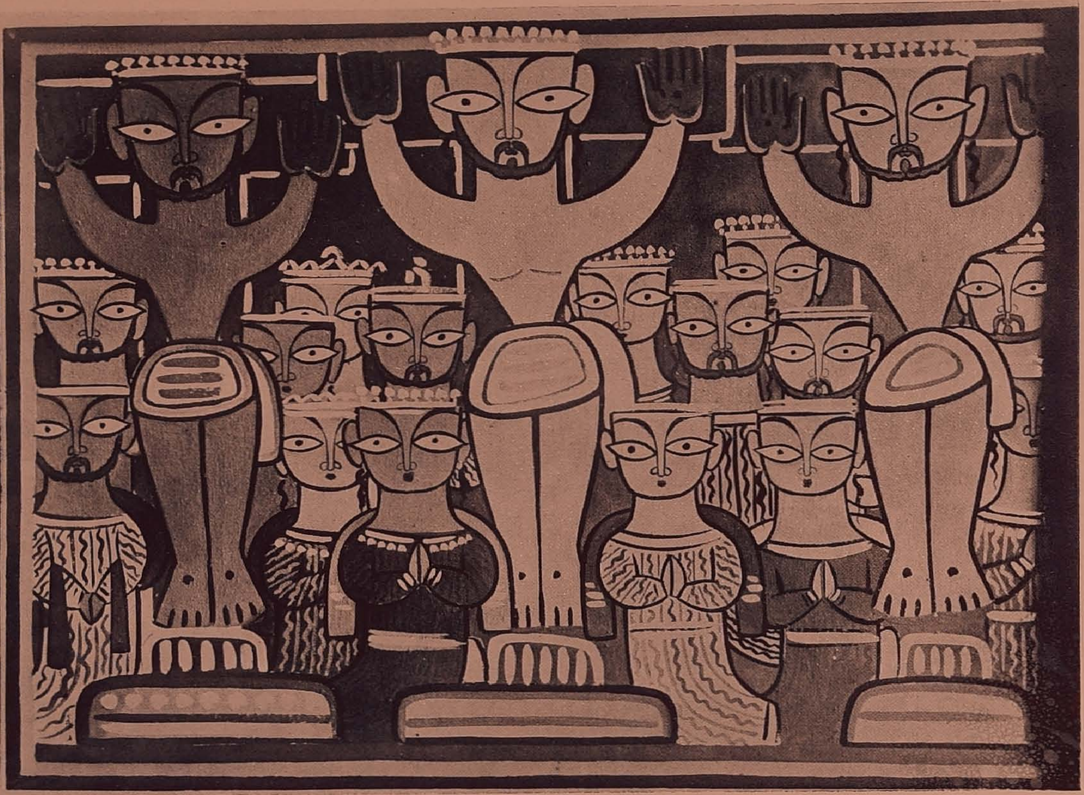
(5)

There is a phrase of Aeschylus which very aptly describes the attitude of the artisan in such a landscape: 'The eye of the soul is bright in sleeping and dark in waking'. Certainly, the village craftsman is not a self-conscious artist. He fulfils his function in the community by drawing upon folk imagination and expressing the communal taste for age old primary colours and designs, the conventional forms, in making things for daily use, such as pots, pans, toys, printed fabrics, scrolls, ritualistic images, etc.

Jamini Roy had seen the skilled men of his village at work in his childhood. And, ostensibly, the instinctive love of the child to potter about in spite of social and class taboo, led him to copy their motives and patterns early. His father, perceiving the boy's predilection, had done what was befitting the status and prestige of a small landlord—sent Jamini Roy to the Government School of Art in Calcutta. When, after about thirty years of the imbecile curriculum and European fashions, he 'returned' to the folk tradition it was therefore not difficult for him to regain the sense of awareness which inspires the devotees in a family who collaborate on certain festivals to draw one line each in the collective picture called the 'Pat' drawing; and he sought out the myths of the *Shaki* (love as devotion) cult.

On the surface, this attempt at a departure from the stustifying rules of the art school is reminiscent of Matisse and Derain. But, under Indian conditions it was, as has been said before, tantamount to a

SANTHAL DANCERS AND MUSICIANS



JESUS

revolution. For Jamini Roy restored to the picture not only the state of mind of the indigenous artisan, but he *consciously* revived that respect for the quality of line which is an Indian speciality, the result perhaps of centuries of effort to attain rhythm, almost as though it were a spiritual exercise. Organisation, balance proportion—these too accrued to him from the folk tradition. But he transformed them as only a forward looking emotive scientist could have done by bringing out the primary characteristics of the figure and formalising the less important features.

No doubt, as Professor Shahid Suhrawardy suggested in his pioneer study of Jamini Roy, his training in European techniques helped him greatly. For instance his departure from the straight line to the curvilinear may have been influenced by what he saw of the French contemporaries. But the synthesis he carried out is significant for his nearness to the basic Indian tradition and his transformation of it into a new style. The sure economy and restraint with which he gets a picture in two or three strokes shows as though he is a medium possessed by the single-minded vision of the 'Pat' draughtsman and yet in alliance with the mood of the most genuine elements in world art.

It is perhaps for this reason that one is particularly impressed by most of his preparatory drawings and sketches. But those who remember the 1938 Calcutta exhibition of Jamini Roy's work will see in his painting a development which now seems to have achieved several phases. Messrs. John Irwin and Bishnu Dey have not reproduced many examples of the early period. Therefore, I would like to press the claims of one of the *Mother and Child* pictures in the collection of Humphrey House in the style with which Jamini Roy first startled us by getting away from the idiotic exuberance of the Calcutta art world. The tall panel called the *Peasant* showed the peculiar discrimination with which Jamini could select abstract characteristics and infuse in painting the strength of simplicity by an

appropriate handling of home made colours. The drama of compositions like the *Santal Dance* which was to develop in the later *Kirtan* pictures is the quintessence of his magical genius, for here painting is approximating to music.

But it is not merely a new way of handling paint that distinguished Jamini Roy's work. In his satirical pictures and cartoons he was already, before the war, aware of the clash of social forces : money lenders and landlords, with the heads of beasts of prey, were symbolic of the emerging peasant struggles as the dream birds were haunted by the sense of malevolent spirits gathering on the horizon. And, apart from the child-like gaiety of the singing parties and the innocence of Virgins, there was the almost insane look of dazed horror in the highly formalised open eyes of most of his figures. The exaggerations of the toy style paintings were also used to show a crazy humour.

If I admit the bias of literary appreciation that enters this way of looking into pictures for some kind of message, there still seems in the development of Jamini Roy from the paintings of village beasts, birds and flowers through his comments on human beauty and dignity to his concentration on the life of Christ, a self-conscious attempt at asking the question : What has happened to us ? Why are we so plagued ? Where are we going ?

Some academic person might say, of course, that Jamini Roy is seeking the peace of the abyss. But the artist denies that. 'Art', he says, 'is work of experience, of stress and strain, wrestling with problems, intellectual and physical'.

That is the nature of his approach to painting. At the best it is a search for value in the manner of a poet who asks : 'What is the true world behind the veil of words ?' But, always, it is a search for integral form, for a new kind of naive beauty which can yet reproduce the disorientated romanticism of our age.

MULK RAJ ANAND

Bombay.

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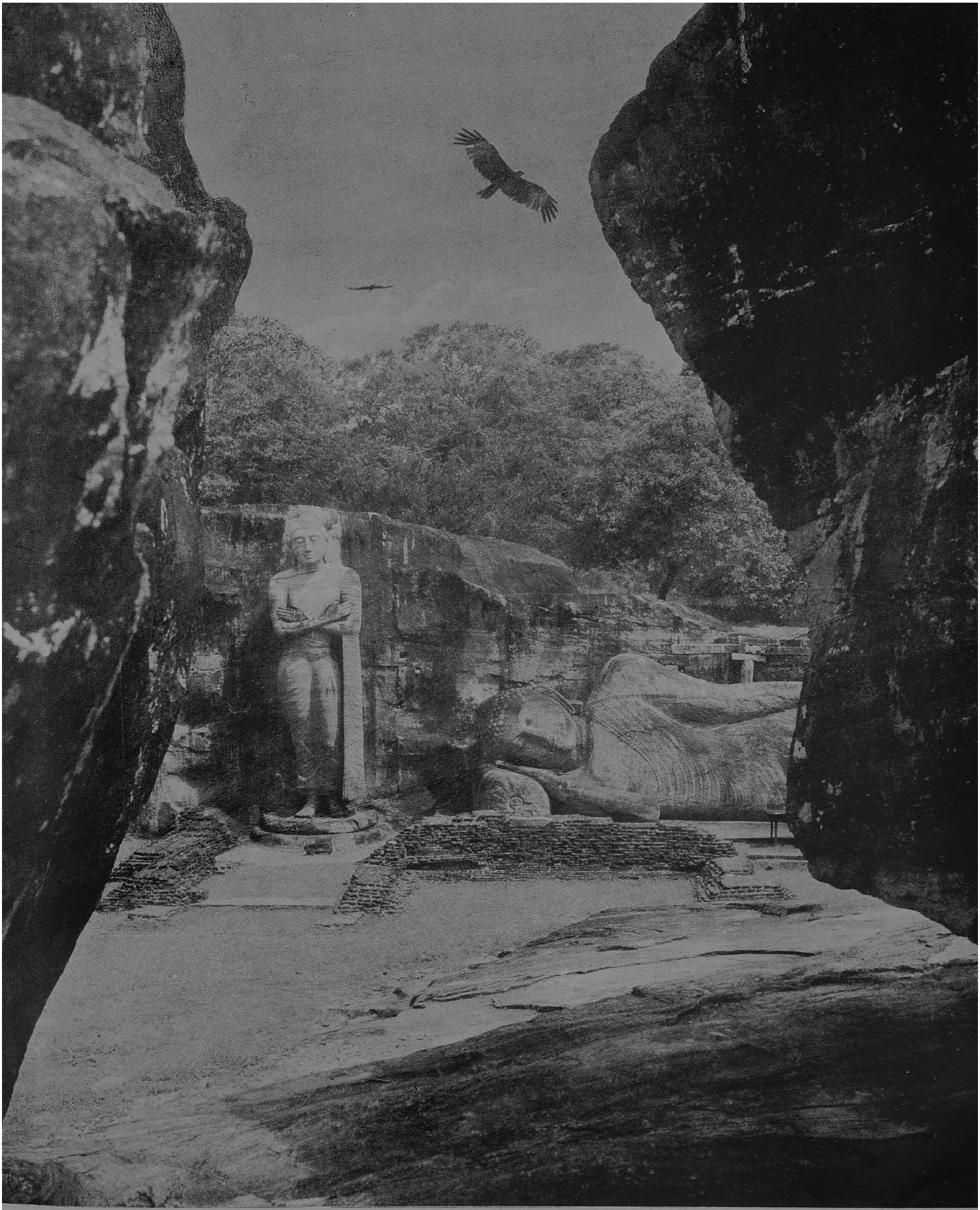

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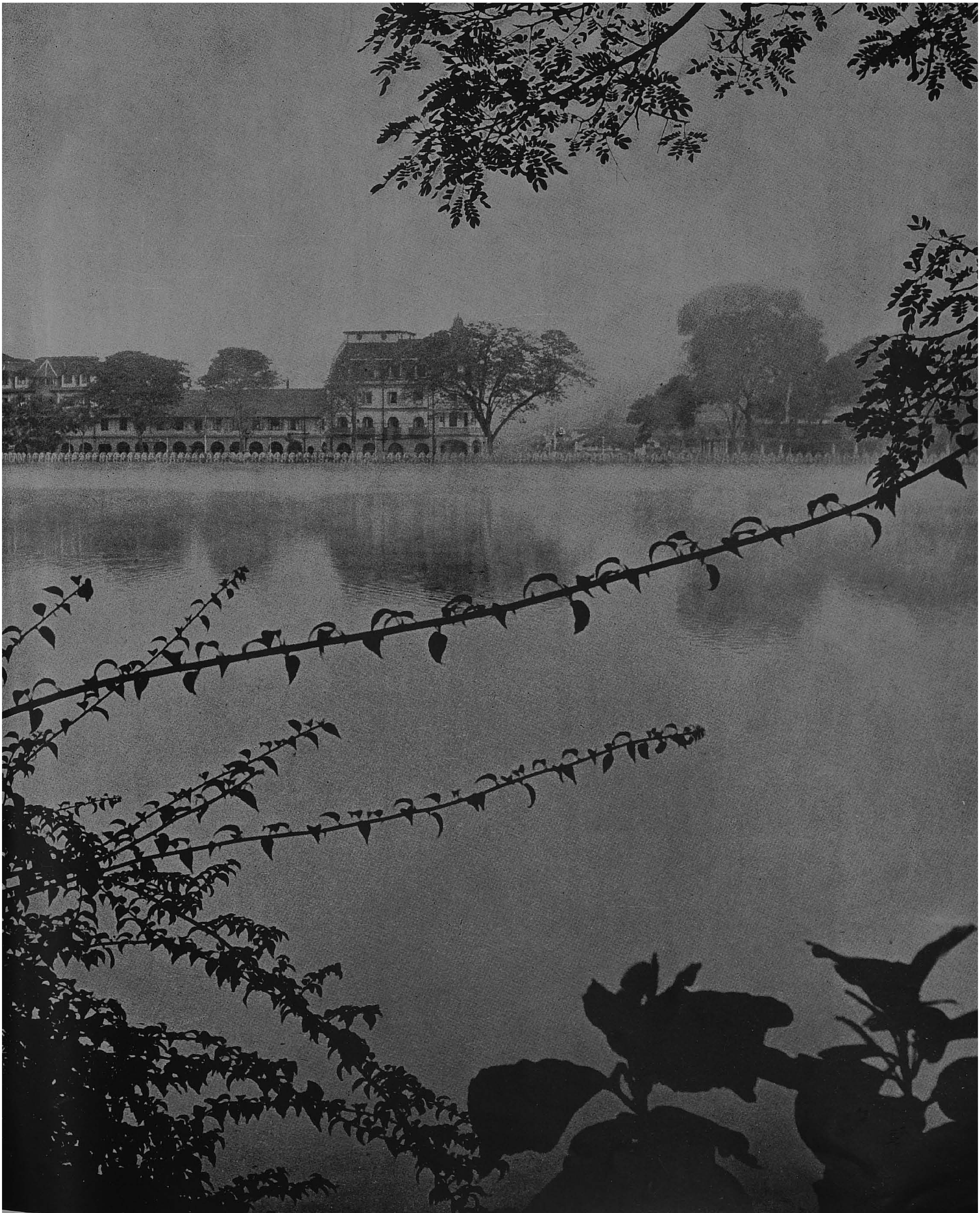

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LUCK'S SYMBOL *I. D. A. Weerawardana*

Ceylon-Dutch Domestic Art

EQUATORIAL HOLLAND, basking in the tropical sun of Eastern Asia, was the heritage of Dutch commercial enterprise in the 16th and 17th centuries. The beautiful palm-fringed coast of Ceylon became one of their sun-porches a little over 300 years ago. The Netherlanders were nevertheless not the first sea-faring adventurers of the modern world who sought commercial gain from Ceylon. That privilege belongs to the Portuguese. They came nearly a hundred and fifty years earlier. Consequently when the foundation of Dutch colonization came to be laid in Ceylon, many an ancient fane of eastern tradition had lost the aloofness it had enjoyed in Ceylon from the beginning of time.

The Dutch colonist who came from lands of grey skies which their most famous seventeenth century painters cherished on canvas, were not exactly, and could not possibly be, soft-spoken uplifters. They were hard business-men moulded in the prevailing codes of those rough and tumble days. They had no time for the ethics and the highly specialised productions of civilizations which were being fashioned on the Continent in mediaeval times, but were however, responsible for certain outstanding characteristics in natural and domestic artistry which was shown to best advantage in the simple and solid architecture they introduced in planning their forts and towns.

The most distinctive feature in the walled Forts which they strung along the coast and over their inland frontiers was the gate-way in the outer rampart. Some of them have heroically withstood the assault of Time and still bear the monogram of the East India Company which went wherever the Dutch went, and was stamped on their copper coins, cast in metal on cannon, sword and bayonet, graved on glass and painted on Delft. Raised on the walls of the forts overlooking glacis and moat, revelin, curtain and faussebray, there always stood the exclusively Dutch belfry.

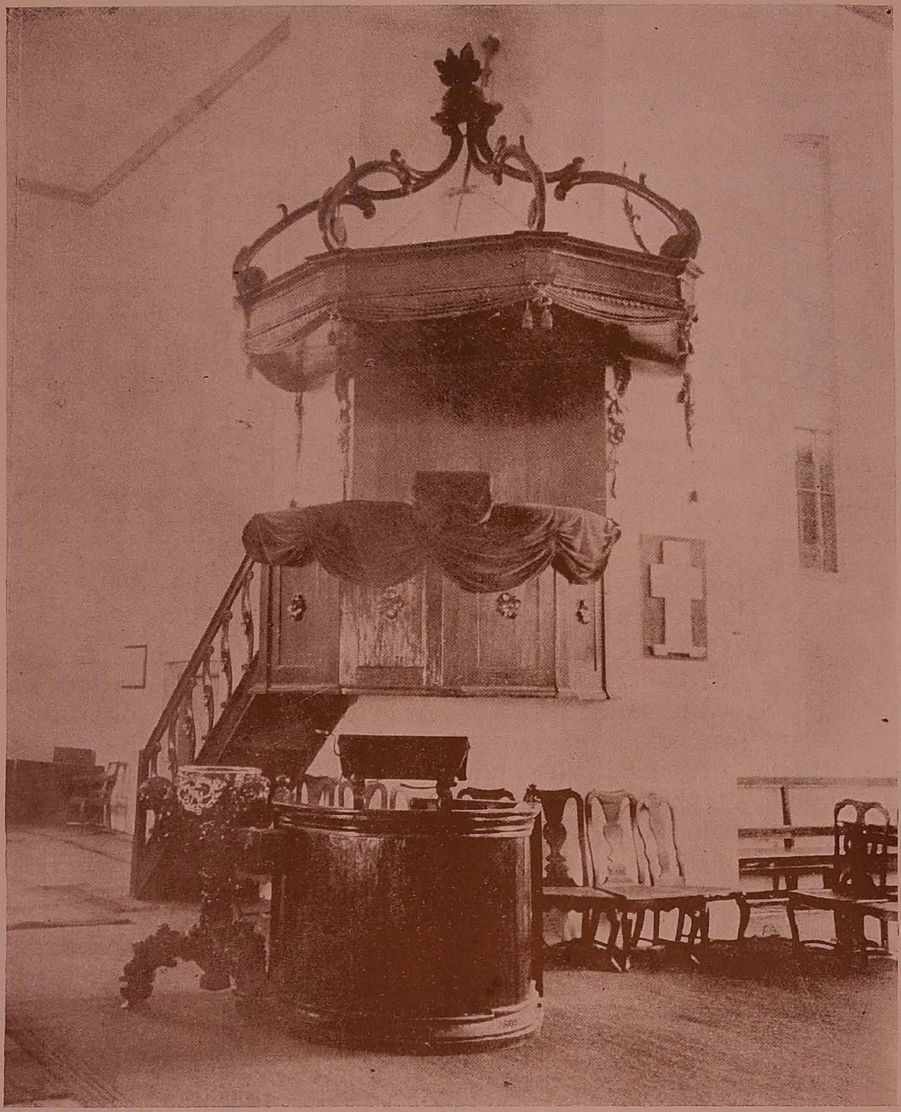
In their larger towns, the settlement was within the walls, sometimes over-flowing to the girdling suburbs which the Dutch called the Pettah. The streets were laid on a rectangular grid and usually showed in perspective two long rows of slender wooden pillars diminishing in the distance. The pillars fronted deep verandahs or *stoeps* and supported low-pitched roofs of one storied buildings which flanked clean and shaded streets. A wooden railing separated verandah from road. The gardens of these villas were sited at the back of the buildings and exhaled in the bewitching coolness of the tropic night, the exotic fragrance of jessamine and mugrin, mignonette oleander and honey-suckle.

The Dutch showed great fondness for bright colours and used them freely to dispel the sameness of this domestic

SIMPLICITY AND SENSITIVENESS IN WOOD-CARVING

The Pulpit in the Wolvendaal Church, and the Baptismal Font to the left of the Lectern.

Photograph by the late Mr. Lionel Wendt.



architecture. Closer inspection discloses considerable variety in ornamental fanlights over the lintels of doorways, and the gable.

The gable, influenced by the mediaeval style then prevalent was an inspiration of the Renaissance. It seems to have captured the fancy of the Dutch who used it in their home-land, and in all their colonies, with every possible variation and detail. It was the one and only means by which the architect was able to diversify the stern and solid style of their architecture. The most characteristically Dutch examples of the gable may be seen to this day in the churches they erected in the principal stations—Colombo (Wolvendaal), Galle and Jaffna.

The latter half of the nineteenth century saw the removal or modernization of many of these old Dutch buildings. In the Colombo Fort, for example, a mounting flood of industrial enterprise, of trade and commerce, forced the merchants' *godowns*, the shops of the petty traders, the coolies employed at the wharves and that mysterious crowded life inseparable from Eastern ports, out of the principal business centres of the Fort into the Pettah. Yielding to the growing need and vital urge, spacious

CHARACTERISTIC DUTCH ARTISTRY IN ARCHITECTURE

One of the four gables of the Wolvendaal Church supported by flat pilasters and spreading scrolls.

5 JUL 1974

Photograph by the late Mr. Lionel Wendt.

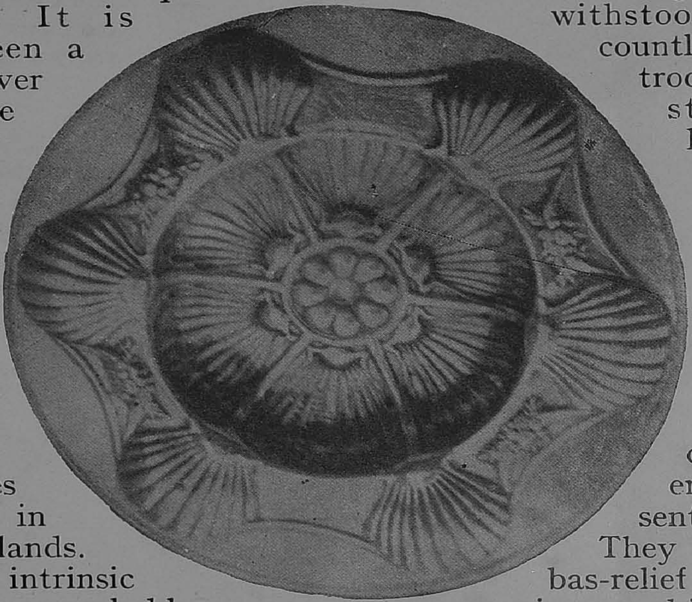
gardens and houses in the suburbs had to make way for stores, boutiques, and dingy dens where humanity massed together. Jostling crows, pestiferous hawkers, slow-moving bullock carts, trams and lorries, in due course invaded and clogged the picturesque streets.

The kaleidoscope of Colonial-Dutch times is thus, but a strange, forgotten dream. It is a vision which can be captured today only in the mind's eye through the traditions and hoary memorials treasured within the walls of the few old Dutch churches, which have served as bulwarks to shut out a work-a-day world.

The interiors of these beautifully proportioned buildings are everywhere stamped with details calculated to touch the most responsive chord of national sentiment, and to harmonise with the severe plainness of their doctrinal standards. The pulpits, built into wall and reached by stair with hand-rail are equally typical styles of the period. A simplicity and sensitiveness about the wood and carving, in the selection and execution of which the Dutch so excelled, bespeak even to the uninitiated

what the world has lost since machinery replaced the patient craftsman. The wooden ribbons and tassels hanging around the canopy over the pulpit, display to perfection the vanishing art.

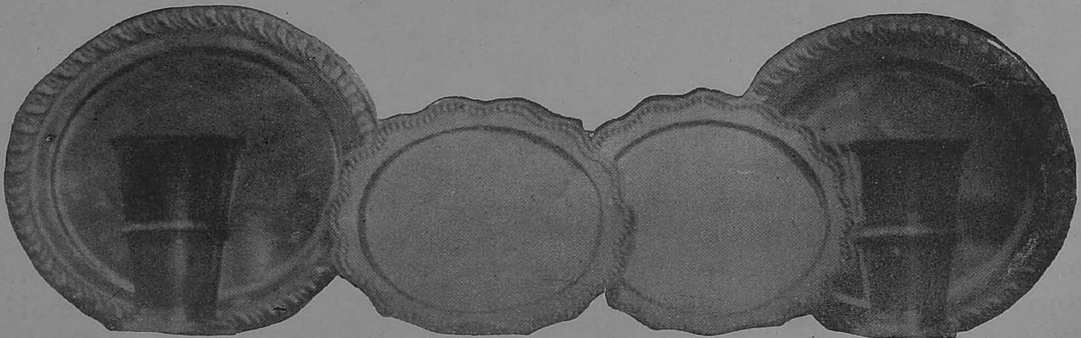
The period during which the Dutch were in Ceylon synchronized with the golden age of furniture development in Europe. It is claimed to have been a period of activity never equalled, ever before or since in the history of furniture. The genius of the Dutch for transferring the atmosphere of their home country to their colonies, has thus been the means of bestowing on Ceylon a wealth of unique furniture modelled on the styles which found favour in their beloved Netherlands.



From an angle of intrinsic and artistic value the remarkable collection of Dutch chairs of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in the old church on the hill of Wolvendaal, in Colombo, is a veritable group of treasures. There is a variety of designs worked in ebony, in nadun, and in that aristocrat of Ceylon woods—calamander, that will fascinate the connoisseur, as it will capture the admiration of the casual visitor. Authorities say that the furniture devoid of the rococo decoration, inspired by Chinese decorative art which the Dutch copied, are the oldest European styles introduced to this Island.

The emblazoned, heraldic hatchments, tomb-stones and monuments set up in these churches are as impressive as they are in many cases highly artistic. The old tombstones which pave the floors mark the positions of crypts and vaults, and have by good fortune been saved from the ravages of time, and withstood the passage of countless feet which have trod on them. These stones are said to have been brought in Dutch ships which sailed from Europe in ballast. The carving was done in Holland, or by specially trained artisans in Ceylon.

In both style and lettering these mediaeval monuments, entrancingly combine sentiment and history. They range from work in bas-relief to artistry in engravings, which display chubby angels blowing trumpet and strumming harp or playing merrily with no less plump and well-nourished human babies; there are winged female figures of wonderful grace and charm, soldiers in armour, cannon, skulls, cross-bones, winged hour glasses exquisitely chiselled, conch-shells and elaborate coats-of-arms.



The beautifully finished silver Communion Plate, hallowed by usage, also display various examples of artistry and craftsmanship of seventeenth century conception. Each piece is chastely designed,

DRY ZONE *David Paynter*

and bears an inscription indicating its weight in rix-dollars or Surat rupees.

The handsome silver baptismal basin at Wolvendaal, is two feet in diameter and weighs $206\frac{3}{4}$ Surat Rupees. Both the basin and the unique carved tripod on which it is placed, have borne a simple pathetic story down the tumultous decades of Dutch history to our day. In the words of an inscription on the carved stand, this font was gifted by Governor van Goens, over two and a half centuries ago. Whilst commemorating the christening of his daughter named Celonia, the mementos also enshrine a tale of human life and love. The mother, Esther de Salome, died the day after her infant daughter was baptised.

The simple contributions in architecture and art which the Dutch made to Ceylon during a century and a half, affords a clear view of facts and proportions. They were a people who had fought bitterly to gain freedom, and therefore brought with them yearnings for a freer expression of human self-esteem: new modes of thought, new ideals of life, new hopes and new aspirations. It was chiefly on these ethical norms that their influence over maritime Ceylon crystallised. Scrupulously blending the decaying talent of the civilization of the past, and educating the craftsman who was native to the soil in manifold ways and directions, they spread their influence gradually over the entire seaboard wrested from the Portuguese, and up to the base of the central mountain zone beyond which Sinhalese Kingship continued to hold sway.

R. L. BROHIER

MR. P. B. THOMAS DE SILVA

Five Notable Craftsmen

ON the eve of her departure from Ceylon, Lady Moore uttered a note of warning to the revivalists of our national arts and crafts. She said that they should not make the mistake of seeking to restore old modes of thought and old methods without weighing what relevancy they have to the modern way of life. The ancient arts and crafts of Ceylon, she thought, should be developed on modern lines. We may go back to the past for

inspiration, but unless we refashion and remodel the ancients' plans to suit modern needs we will gain very little by taking them as our models.

The truth of what Lady Moore said last year a low-country Sinhalese who has made Kandy his home, Mr. P. B. Thomas de Silva, realised 30 years ago when he made a close study of the Kandyan carvers' and metal-workers' arts. Since then he has helped the Kandyan craftsman, who had merely followed the beaten track, to mould old patterns to new needs. He is not a craftsman himself, but the craftsman regards him as his friend, philosopher and guide. He is inseparable from the fraternity of craftsmen, for it is he who gives the ideas, plans the work and directs the craftsman. Hence, he is classed here as a notable craftsman.

It may truly be said that Mr. De Silva has done more than any other man to secure a fair price for the craftsman's handiwork. After he enlisted the support of Messrs. Hemachandra Brothers of Colombo about ten years ago, he has found more or less regular employment for over a hundred Kandyan craftsmen who were eking out a miserable existence.

Artistic silverware produced by Kandyan craftsmen under Mr. De Silva's direction during the last 30 years have found places of honour in the museums of Europe and America, in the Vatican and in palaces of East and West. Men like Lloyd George and Bernard Shaw both of whom had met him when they visited Kandy and a host of other distinguished visitors to Ceylon have expressed their high appreciation of his work. The magnificent trophies presented at big sporting events in Ceylon

SINGAMINI PATABENDI L. K. MUDALIHAMY

in the recent past and the fine silverware seen in the Ceylon market today have been designed and made under his guidance.

* * *

One of the first craftsmen to remodel ancients' plans to suit modern needs is Singamini Patabendi L. K. Mudalihamy, a descendant of a master craftsman who had won Royal favour during the time of the Sinhalese kings. He has also evolved a number of remarkable new patterns.

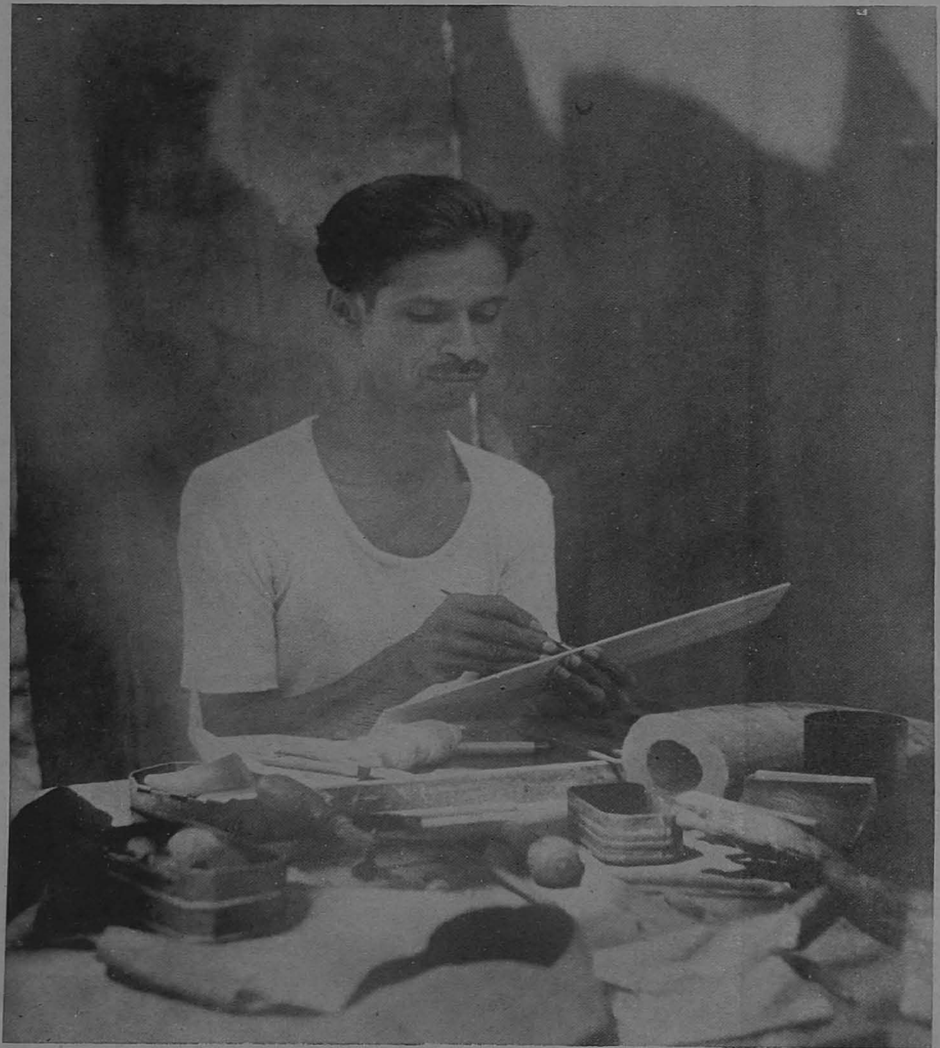
Engraver on metals, ivory and wood carver, goldsmith and silversmith, Mudalihamy stands in a class by himself. The quickness with which he executes works of great merit is his forte. This has made him the most sought-after Kandyan craftsman of the day.

* * *

The most versatile Kandyan craftsman of today is undoubtedly Appu Swarnatilleke of Mawanella.

Peerless ivory-carver, he works with equal facility on gold, silver, brass, copper and wood, and deftly uses the painter's brush.

A direct descendant of a brother of Dewaragampola Silavatenna Unnanse, the celebrated painter-monk, who painted Degaldoruwa and other ancient temples, Appu Swarnatilleke has a deep knowledge of his crafts, and the intense vision of the great artist.



UDATTAWA RAJAGURU OTUNU PANDITA SWARNATILAKA SAAKYA SENEVIRATNA MOOLACHARYGE APPU SWARNATILAKA

Mr. Appu Swarnatilleke, the well-known Ceylon craftsman, states that the illustration of the *Vaka-Deka* (the alphabet of Sinhalese art) appearing in Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy's *Medieval Sinhalese Art* is incorrectly drawn. Here is what Swarnatilleke claims to be a correct drawing of *Vaka-Deka*.

He points out that the illustration of the *Vaka-deka* (the alphabet of Sinhalese art) appearing in Ananda Coomaraswamy's *Mediaeval Sinhalese Art* is incorrect. He attributes this mistake to the printer's ignorance of Sinhalese art and says that the plate has been incorrectly placed. (An illustration of what Swarnatilleke claims to be a correct drawing of *Vaka-deka* appears elsewhere in this magazine.—Editor)

Swarnatilleke lives on *Nindagam*, the lands the Sinhalese kings had donated to his ancestors as a tribute to their skill.

* * *

Another craftsman who does not blindly imitate the past but evolves new patterns to suit modern needs is Rajaguru Patabendi Appu Dewasurendra, son of Dewasurendra Rajaguru Patabendige Kiri Appu Mudiyanse, a famous craftsman of his day.

Designer, engraver, goldsmith and silversmith, Appu Dewasurendra is an acknowledged master of his crafts.

Among his outstanding works was the magnificent gold casket Ceylon presented to King George V on the occasion of His Majesty's Coronation.

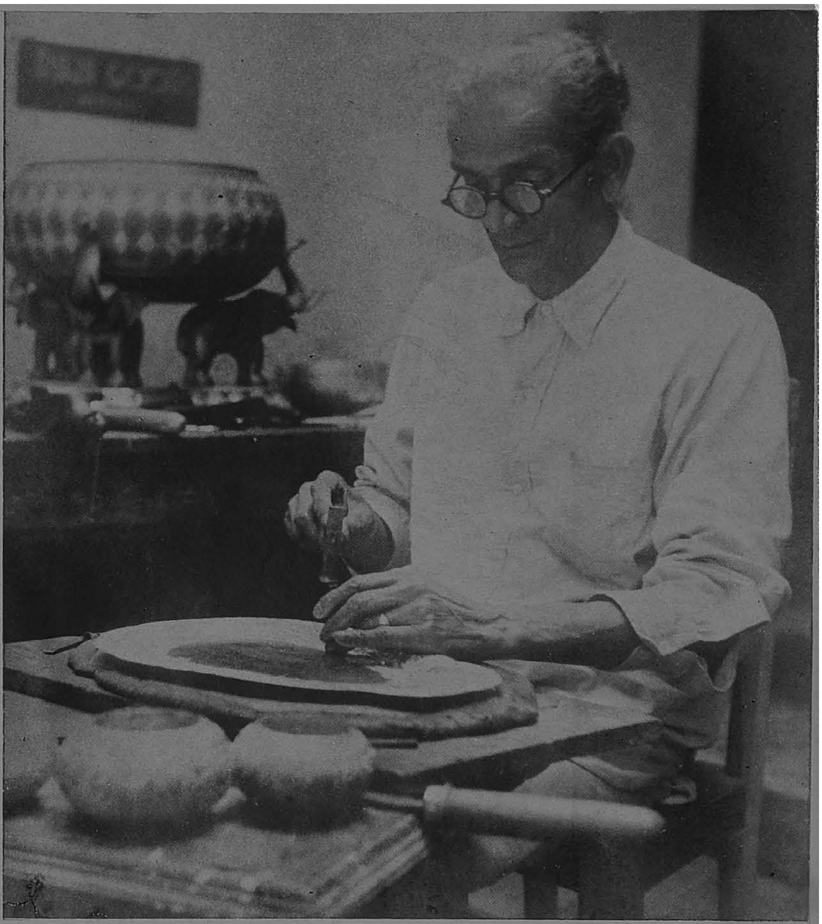
* * *

The maker of the first lacquered walking-stick, the first lacquered paper-knife, the first lacquered penholder and the first lacquered coconut-shell, Kiri Naide Hangediya is the foremost lacquer painter of today. Despite his age, he retains his sense of colour.

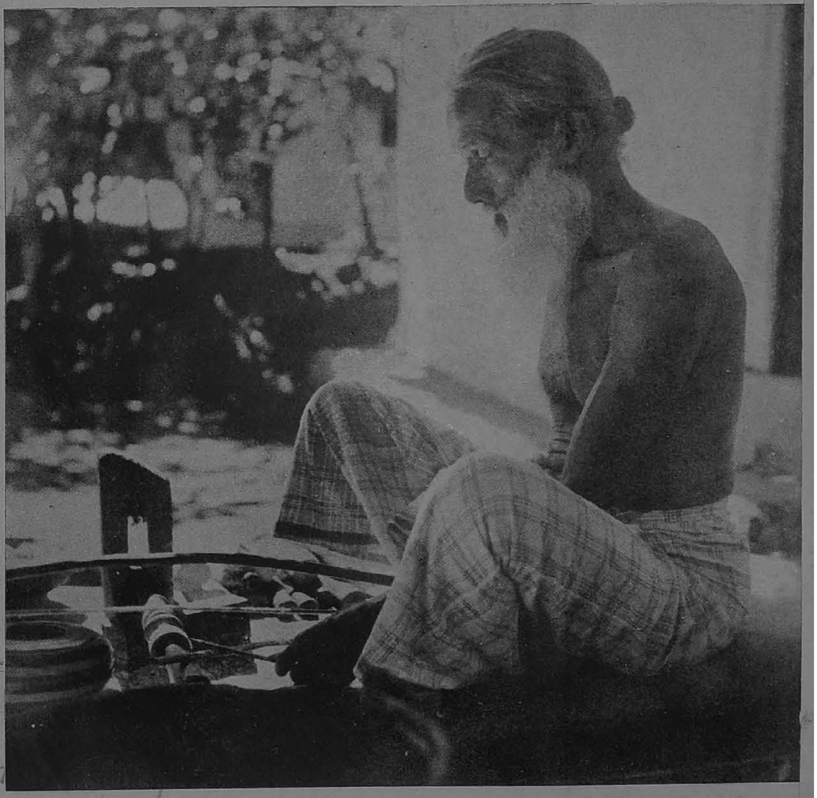
When the Prince of Wales (now Duke of Windsor) was going past Hangediya's stall at the All-Ceylon Industries Exhibition in 1921, Hangediya attracted the Prince's attention by raising a lacquered walking-stick. The Prince then stepped in and Hangediya presented him with a walking-stick.

D.G.

5 JUL 197



RAJAGURU PATABENDI APPU DEWASURENDRA



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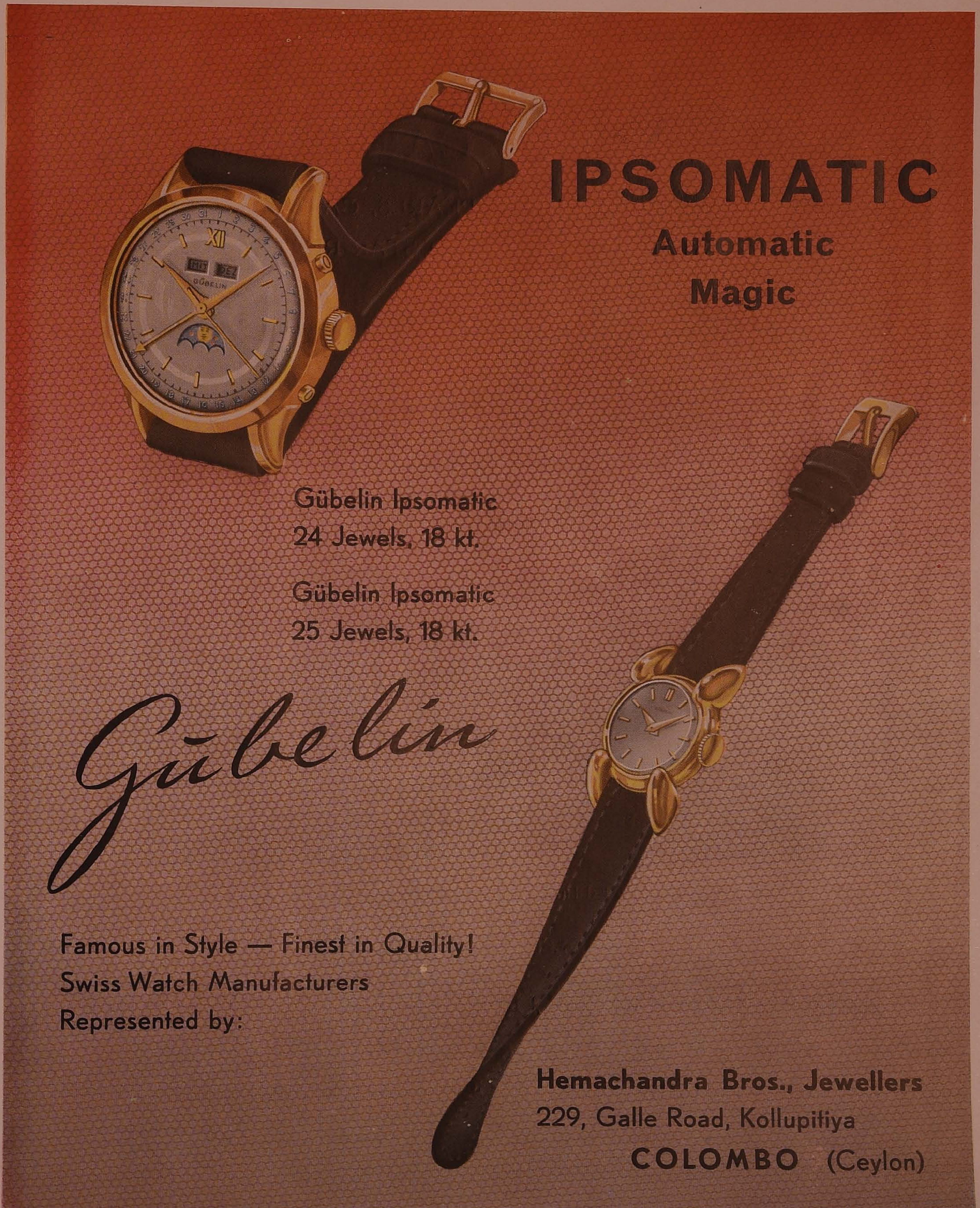
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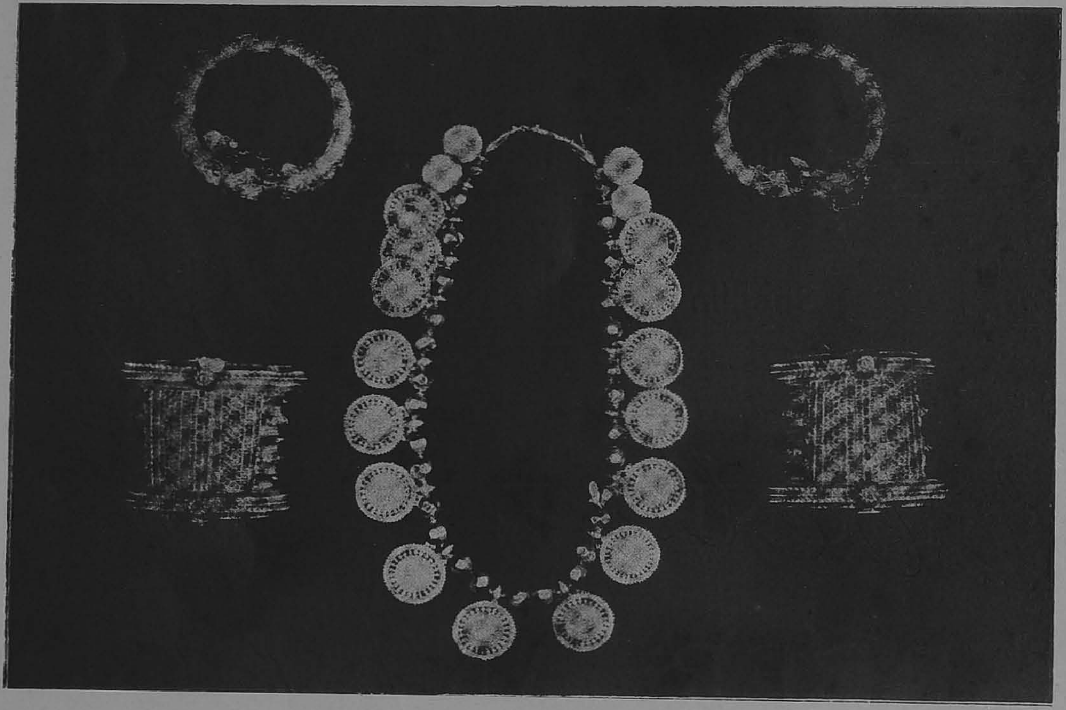

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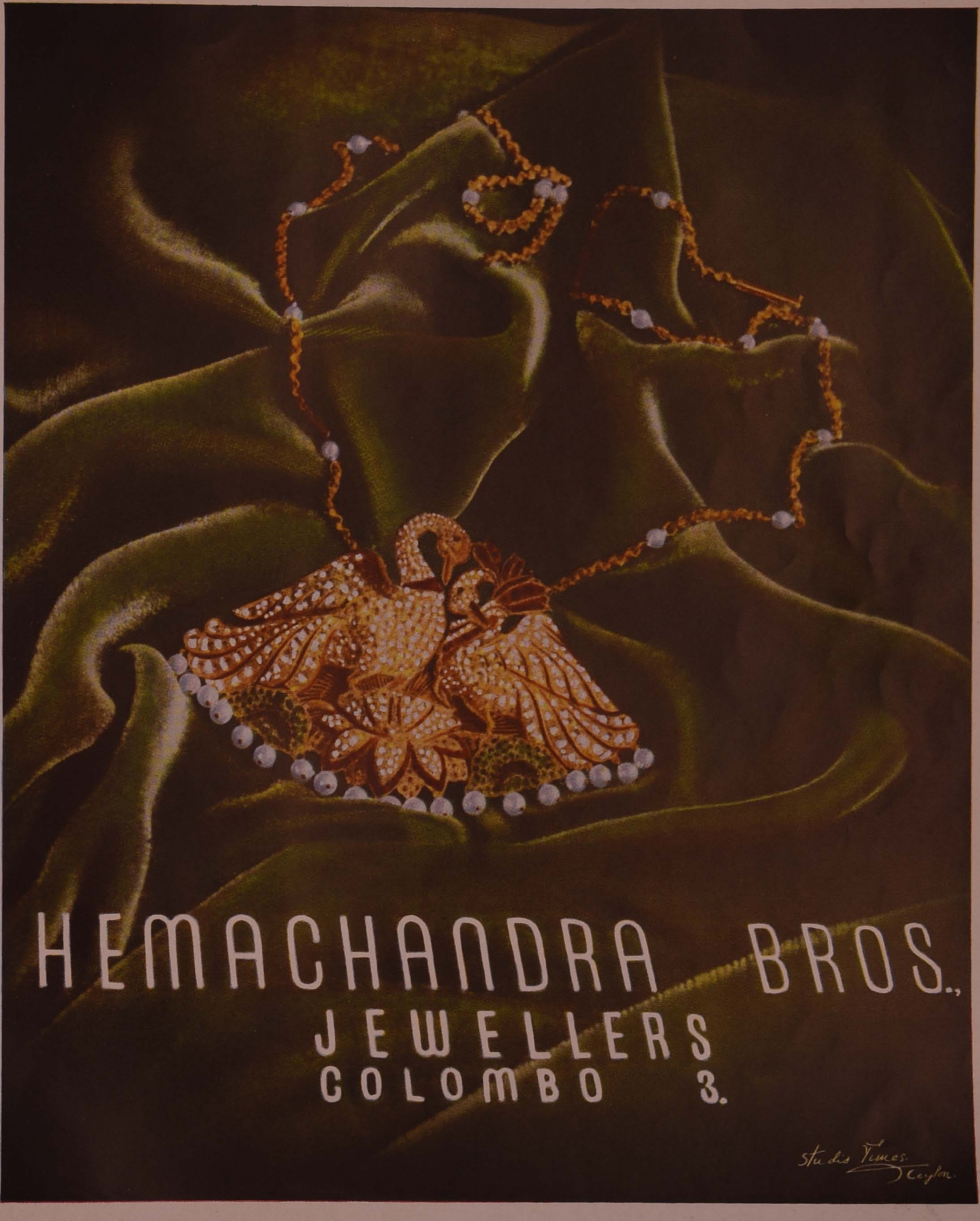
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